

THE RELATABLE PROBLEM

Whether you came to cloth diapers because it's a natural fit for you and your parenting style, or because of a global pandemic, you're here because you're choosing to do what's best for your baby. But with the best intentions, after deciding to try cloth diapers you likely began researching—maybe going on Facebook groups, and reading blogs—and this is often where it gets frustrating.

Blogs offer contradicting advice, and on the surface all of them sound like they know what they're talking about. But, even with all of that information out there on Google, social media seems to be filled with post after post about washing problems causing rashes, leaks, or other frustrations.

It's overwhelming! It can make you feel defeated before you even begin!

THE SOLUTION

Thankfully, it's also unnecessary, if you're using the right resource that is—this book!

In this book, I don't talk about what types of diapers are best, how to use diapers, or how to convince crabby naysayers that it's not so hard. What you will learn is everything you need to know about cloth diaper wash and care.

Even better, you'll learn it in such a way that at the end of the book you should be empowered enough to not need to make any desperate social media posts.

So let's get started!

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO BAKE A COOKIE—AND TO WASH A DIAPER!

My grandmother perfected her peanut butter cookies over many years to suit her taste. They were flakey, crispy, and not too sweet.



I have that recipe tucked away in a yellow binder that holds my most treasured recipes. Though they aren't my favorite cookies, I bake them now and then just to remember the feeling of standing in her kitchen.

My husband on the other hand, isn't a fan of these cookies. He enjoys soft, chocolate chip cookies with M&M pieces added in. The soft cookie, chocolate taste, and bit of candy crunch are his idea of the perfect cookie.

These two completely different cookies are just variations, based off of the same basic ingredients: butter, sugar, baking powder, and eggs.

WHY AM I TALKING ABOUT COOKIES?

The truth is, we all suck at laundry.

In the laundry room, most of us are taught to do overkill. We want beautifully clean, brilliantly white, soft and fluffy laundry results.

And we don't measure.

We pour stuff out of jugs, straight into the washer, often adding a second big jug just to make sure.

We use liquid fabric softener by the gallon and dryer sheets by the hundreds because there's no such thing as too soft. And when things come out looking gray and feeling stiff and crunchy, what do we do? More detergent, more softener, and even more dryer sheets!

It's like we're all baking without a recipe.

What would cookies look like if you just kept adding more flour and chocolate without measuring? Bad, right? When things start to burn or come out of the oven all goopy, we turn to our recipe book. For cloth diapers, since there is no recipe book — or at least there wasn't until now — we turn online.

There we find websites and forums that talk about "the science" of cloth diaper laundry (often without referencing



anything truly scientific, but I digress), or about the mechanics of front loaders, and how poop requires special enzymes in your detergent, etc. They do this in an effort to create the “rules” of cloth diaper wash and care.

Everyone wants that half-page wash and care cheat sheet that solves every problem. They want to post it in every cloth diaper group and be thanked for sharing this magic list of do’s and don’ts that fixes everything.

How I wish that were true!

But after years of trial-and-error, research, and seeing all of those on-page magic-bullet cheat sheets fail so many people, I’ve learned that cloth diaper wash and care has a lot more to do with cookie baking than list-making. And I share all the baking secrets in this book, so keep reading!

WHY SO MANY OTHER RESOURCES FAIL

Many cloth diaper blogs and online groups offer their communities a “wash routine” if they give them the name of the detergent they’re using. With just the name of a detergent (and sometimes, if the resource isn’t completely clueless, a water hardness reading) new cloth diaper parents handed a wash routine that goes something like this:

Prewash: Line 1

Main Wash: Line 3 using a heavy duty cycle

That’s it.

No consideration is given to whether their washer is 2.5 cubic feet, or double that (both completely possible). Likewise, no consideration is given whether or not they are washing 30 diapers or six.

Is that ringing any alarm bells? It should, here’s why.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE RECIPE FAILS?

If I were to bake my grandmother’s cookies with the flour

measurement from my husband's M&M cookie recipe, and the sugar measurement from my well-intentioned neighbour's pecan pie recipe, I'd end up with some possibly nasty cookies. I would feel more like I was standing on the set of *Nailed It* than my grandmother's kitchen when eating them.

The difference between a cookie recipe and a cloth diaper wash recipe, is that if you get your diaper wash measurements wrong, you don't get a meh cookie, you can get smelly diapers, and potentially, rashes and leaks.

What I'm trying to hit home here is that a perfect wash recipe for one person could cause serious issues for someone else.

As an example, if someone with a small apartment size washer and soft water were to use line 4 of Tide in their cloth diaper wash, they would quickly have detergent buildup. That buildup would cause their diapers to hold onto urine and ammonia. That layering on of detergent, urine, and ammonia would quickly make those diapers stink, and likely cause a painful diaper rash.

On the other hand, a person with a very large washer, and very hard water, may need to use even more, say line 5, of that same detergent and not have a single issue.

Every case is different. Every wash and care routine is a recipe that's unique to the needs of the person using it.

I know, that sounds complicated. And compared to just typing in a brand name of detergent and getting a random "routine," it is. But you know what's even worse? Troubleshooting problems caused by poor washing. I mean just think about how complicated cloth diapers are themselves.

WHY IS WASHING CLOTH DIAPERS MORE COMPLICATED THAN REGULAR LAUNDRY?

Unlike your clothes, cloth diapers are multi-layered, tightly sewn, and often wrapped in water-resistant material on one side. These complex, multi-layered things are then soaked top-to-bottom in human waste and left to sit a few days until wash day. Once they are out of the wash, they're then placed right next

to the most sensitive areas of the most sensitive person in your home, your baby.

This is a whole lot different than a pair of pants or a blouse you wore to the office one day.

While regular laundry can be washed pretty much any which way and all will be well, cloth diapers are going to need a bit more care and consideration to get right. And I'm going to show you how to do it soon, but first let's take a second to review the process of this book.

HOW TO BAKE COOKIES (AND WASH DIAPERS)

Before you begin to bake, you need to prepare a bit.

First, you get out your bowl, mixer, and spoons. Then you check to see if you have all the ingredients, and measure everything out to make sure you have enough. Then you check the recipe, maybe preheat the oven. Then, you get baking!

That's the way I've set this book out as well.

First, you'll get your tools and equipment ready: your diaper accessories, storage, washing machine (or suitable replacement if you live in an RV or apartment where a washer isn't available), and dryer. Next, you'll get your ingredients ready: your diapers, detergent, and water.

After everything is measured and ready to go, you'll follow the recipe that suits your needs.

Finally, I also cover some troubleshooting information and things to watch for in case you're coming to this book after having struggled with washing in the past, or if for some reason any measurements were wrong, etc.

So, let's get baking!