



A Word on Wipes

By Laura A. Jana, MD, FAAP and Jennifer Shu, MD, FAAP

Although we haven't officially counted, there have to be about as many brands and types of baby wipes as there are tennis shoes—environmentally friendly, all-natural, scented and unscented, with aloe and without it, in round containers, in refillable rectangular containers, and in reusable or disposable travel packs. And while they may cost only a few cents a wipe if you don't go for the top of the line or opt for fancy packaging, the cost can still add up.



Here are some points to consider when buying and using baby wipes:

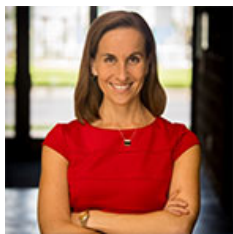
- **Packaging.** After one look at the shelves, you won't need us to tell you that when it comes to buying wipes, you pay for packaging. However, doing so is not always a bad thing. For example, someone who clearly had firsthand experience in the use of wipes on the go must have come up with the handy little travel-sized packs, and many parents find the added convenience well worth the extra money. That said, it is useful to hang on to reusable plastic travel containers and full-sized refillable plastic containers. By simply buying large refill packs and restocking them yourself, you can save the extra expense.
- **Don't flush 'em.** Enough said—almost. There are very few wipes on the market that don't have the potential to wreak havoc on your plumbing. Be sure to check package labels before buying if you are determined to find wipes that are flushable because most of them are not. Even then, seasoned plumbers will tell you that despite their name, the flushable ones still have the unfortunate tendency to get stuck.
- **Warm 'em?** Some people are convinced that warm wipes are less shocking to a baby's skin. It sounds reasonable: given that a baby's body temperature is 98.6°F and regular damp wipes are roughly 60°F, we're talking about a 40°F difference. There are many options when it comes to choosing a wipe-warming unit—AC power adapter and/or car charger, heat from the top or heat from the sides, a constant 104°F wipe temperature inside the unit, built-in nightlights, and more. Realistically speaking, though, most babies are not afforded this luxury and get used to cool wipes right from the start.
- **The overuse of wipes.** Believe it or not, not every diaper change requires the use of wipes. This is not only because pee is rarely irritating but also because today's superabsorbent disposable diapers effectively limit the amount of pee that comes into contact with your baby's skin. Reserving wipes for cleaning up poop can save you a considerable amount. Also, keep in mind that a moist tissue, a wet washcloth, or even a quick rinse in the tub may be used in place of baby wipes when convenient.

More information

- [Common Diaper Rashes & Treatments \(/English/ages-stages/baby/diapers-clothing/Pages/Diaper-Rash.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/baby/diapers-clothing/Pages/Diaper-Rash.aspx)

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About Dr. Jana



Laura A. Jana, MD, FAAP, is a pediatrician and mother of 3 with a faculty appointment at the Penn State University Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center. She is the author of more than 30 parenting and children's books and serves as an early childhood expert/contributor for organizations including the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Primrose Schools, and *US News & World Report*. She lives in Omaha, NE.

About Dr. Shu



Jennifer Shu, MD, FAAP (<https://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/publishing/Pages/Jennifer-Shu-and-Laura-Jana.aspx>) serves as the medical editor of HealthyChildren.org and provides oversight and direction for the site in conjunction with the staff editor. Dr. Shu is a practicing pediatrician at Children's Medical Group in Atlanta, Georgia, and she is also a mom. She earned her medical degree at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond and specialized in pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco. Her experience includes working in private practice, as well as working in an academic medical center. She served as director of the normal newborn nursery at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical

Center in New Hampshire. Dr. Shu is also co-author of *Food Fights* (<https://shop.aap.org/food-fights-winning-the-nutritional-challenges-of-parenthood-armed-with-a-bottle-of-ketchup-2nd-e-2/>) and *Heading Home with Your Newborn* (<https://ebooks.aappublications.org/content/heading-home-with-your-newborn-2nd-edition>) published by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Last Updated 5/15/2021

Source Adapted from *Heading Home with Your Newborn: Birth to Reality*, 4th Edition, (Copyright © 2020 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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