



## Detergent Residue and Diapers

### *Detergent Residue Explained*

Detergent residue is a film left on fabric by detergent. It can build up on any items that you wash - clothes, bedding, etc. Usually you will notice it only when you have residue on a product that is supposed to be absorbent or waterproof - like diapers and diaper covers.

Believe it or not, the problem of detergent residue in the cloth diapering world is a relatively new one. This is because lately detergent manufacturers seem to be adding all sorts of extra ingredients to their formulas in order to make their products stand out in the market. Extra additives may help products grab attention on the supermarket shelf, but can pose serious problems for folks washing cloth diapers - not to mention those with sensitive skin!

Having detergent residue on your diapers and diaper covers can cause tons of problems, including:

1. Leaking and wicking onto babies' clothing
2. Repelling liquid (beading)
3. Stinky diapers or covers
4. Skin rashes
5. Yellowing of white fabrics

You can see the signs of detergent residue right away if your diapers and covers are washed with way too much detergent - but more commonly it will take a couple of months before you have any problems. You may even find that one of your covers develops problems before the rest.

If diaper covers are leaking or wicking because of a residue problem, or if repelling diapers are causing leaky messes, some people might just assume that their products are worn out or defective- without realizing that they actually have a problem with a solution! Same goes for smelly diapering products - remember that clean, residue free diapers and covers should never smell like either detergent or urine!

**If the residue is not too extensive, you can usually get rid of it by doing several hot water washes with no detergent, then throwing the diapers and covers in the dryer. If this doesn't do the trick, give our customer service department a call at 1-888-828-6647. We would be happy to help you out!**

### *Choosing a Detergent*

Whether or not a detergent will leave residue on your diapers can depend on:

- what the detergent is made of
- how much detergent you use in your wash
- how much water your wash cycle uses
- the quality of your water (hard or soft)

Check out the ingredients list if it's available. The shorter the list, the less chance that the detergent contains additives. You can also look for cheaper detergents, as they tend to be composed more simply and with fewer additives than their fancy counterparts. Your best option is to go for an additive free or zero-residue detergent. Please check out our detergent list for safe recommendations, or visit our website at

[www.bummis.com](http://www.bummis.com)

*If you choose a detergent that does not appear on our detergent list, please make sure it does not contain any of the following additives:*

**Fabric softeners** are pretty easy to avoid since added fabric softeners are usually clearly marked on packaging. Fabric softeners will cause wicking and repelling of liquid on most fabrics.

**Optical Brighteners** are added to many detergents. Words like "brighter," "whiter," or "cleaner" on packaging are signs that a detergent might include them. Optical brighteners (also called optical bleaches or fluorescent whitening agents) are fluorescent white dyes that absorb ultraviolet light and emit back visible blue light. This gives the impression that clothes are brighter and cleaner – but these dye particles can build up on fabric causing leaking and wicking and sometimes eye or skin irritations. Optical brighteners have also been identified as being toxic to fish and other aquatic life – and some are even capable of causing mutations in bacteria. On top of that, they are very slow to biodegrade. So far, science does not know the full extent of their presence in our environment, and how their presence affects animal health...

**Stain Guards** are usually easy to spot in detergents, since brands use them as a selling point. Phrases to look out for on packaging are "stain repelling" or "stain protection." Stain guards will coat fibers.

**Natural Additives** usually show up in detergents in the form of oils. Like chemical additives, they do not always cause a problem- but with time, natural oils can build up and lead to wicking, leaking and repelling of liquids. Examples include orange oil, citrus extract, and grape seed extract.

**Soaps** are naturally derived (this is what sets them apart from detergents) and can react with the minerals in water to create a film on whatever you wash. This film can leave a residue and turn clothes grayish. Castile soap is an example of a natural soap that can cause a residue problem.

### **Bummis recommendations for safe washing products are:**

#### *Detergents*

Sensi-Clean and Sport-Wash ([www.atsko.com](http://www.atsko.com))

Charlie's Soap ([www.charliesoap.com](http://www.charliesoap.com))

Country Save ([www.countrysave.com](http://www.countrysave.com))

Allen's Naturally ([www.allensnaturally.com](http://www.allensnaturally.com))

Mountain Green Baby Free & Cleaer ([www.mountaingreen.biz](http://www.mountaingreen.biz))

Seventh Generation Delicate Care ([www.seventhgeneration.com](http://www.seventhgeneration.com))

\*Nature Clean Powder or Liquid ([www.naturecleanliving.com](http://www.naturecleanliving.com))

\*Claudia's Choices ([www.claudiaschoices.ca](http://www.claudiaschoices.ca))

\*Wonder Wash ([www.wonderwash.net](http://www.wonderwash.net))

#### *Bleach Alternatives (always use in moderation!)*

Oxy-Boost Oxygen Bleach ([www.oxyboost.com](http://www.oxyboost.com))

\*Nature Clean Oxygen Bleach ([www.naturecleanliving.com](http://www.naturecleanliving.com))

\*BioVert Oxygen Bleach ([www.prolav.com](http://www.prolav.com))

\* easy to find in Canada