

RESIDUES

We believe that residues are now the single most important issue in troubleshooting problems with cloth nappy users. We would like to explain to you what residues are and how to avoid them - and also how to resolve them if your nappies do develop a residue problem.

If your nappy covers are leaking or wicking or if your nappies are not absorbing properly and are causing leaky messes, your nappy products are probably not worn out or defective. Most likely they actually have a residue problem which can be resolved.

The same is true in the case of smelly nappy products. Some people believe that certain nappy products are just plain smelly – not true! Clean nappies and covers should never smell like detergent or ammonia! If they do – then most likely you are using too much detergent and/or have a urine residue problem which can be solved.

How do I know if I have a residue?

- Stinky nappies and/or nappy covers
- Discoloured nappies (in the case of synthetic fabrics) or nappy covers
- Non-absorbing nappies
- Leaking nappy covers
- Nappy rash

What causes residue?

- Too much detergent
- Using a detergent with additives (see list below)
- Not using enough water to wash with
- Not using enough detergent
- Dryer sheets (even if used only in your regular laundry)

Are some fabrics more likely to develop residue?

Yes! Nappy fabrics made from polyester: PUL, suede cloth, fleece, etc. are more likely to develop residue problems than natural fibres.

I think my nappy and/or nappy covers have a residue problem! What can I do?

We will tell you how to solve your residue problem (see below), *but the most important thing is to find out what is causing it so that you can change your washing routine in order to avoid having the same problem again!*

DETERGENT RESIDUES

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 nappies and nappy covers!

You can see the signs of detergent residue right away if your nappies 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.

detergent residues continued ...

Here are the problems you may see:

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

Why do you have this problem?

1. **You may be using too much detergent.** If you are using the correct amount of detergent for the size of load you are washing but if there is not enough water in your machine, it will be too much detergent.
2. **Or you may be using a detergent with additives that leave residue in the fibres.** Detergent companies put additives into their formulas in order to attract us with cleaner, brighter, whiter, softer, etc. promises. This can cause problems for people with sensitive skin as well as causing residue on your laundry. Below is a brief outline of what to watch out for when you shop for detergents.

Fabric Softeners are usually clearly marked on detergent packaging, thus easy to avoid. They 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 chemicals that absorb ultraviolet light and emit back visible blue light. This gives the impression that clothes are brighter and cleaner – but these 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. In addition, they are very slow to biodegrade. So far, science does not know the full impact of their presence in our environment, and how they affect 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 fibres.

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 grey. Castile soap is an example of a natural soap that can cause a residue problem.

Detergent residues can easily be solved!

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 nappies and covers in the dryer. **Make sure you are washing with enough hot water!!!** If you cannot adjust your machine manually to the highest water level, call the manufacturer. If they cannot instruct you on how to adjust the water level to the highest water level, use the wet towel trick! Decrease the number of nappies you wash per load, and add wet towels to your load in order to trick your machine into adding more water.

Multiple rinses will not work – you must increase the level of water used to wash and rinse your nappies.

detergent residues continued ...

Check your nappies for absorbency by pouring a small amount of warm water onto your nappy. Remember to apply slight pressure if your nappy has a synthetic interior. If your nappy still does not absorb properly, or if your nappy smells like detergent or ammonia, please call our customer service department at our international toll free number **0808-101-7038**. We would be happy to help you sort it out.

URINE RESIDUES

As more and more people replace their washing machines with high efficiency front loader models, we have seen more of this type of residue

Your nappies should smell clean after they are washed. If they smell like urine, then it is clear that they have a urine residue. If they smell clean after they are washed and then like ammonia after the first pee, then it is probable that they have a urine residue.

How do I know I have a urine residue?

- Strong odour of ammonia
- Bad nappy rash

Where does the "stink" come from?

When a wet nappy smells really bad, it is most likely due to an overproduction of ammonia. In the body, ammonia is converted to urea and excreted. Once the urine is released, the urea begins converting back to ammonia, so some ammonia smell is perfectly normal.

Lingering urea in the nappy and certain types of bacteria can speed up and increase the production of ammonia. So if you smell an unusually strong odour of ammonia after your baby pees, you most likely have a biological residue in your nappy.

This residue is most commonly caused by not using enough water to wash and rinse nappies clean. It can also be caused by not using enough detergent. Detergent is what enables water to enter the fibres of the cloth and release its soil (by decreasing the surface tension of the water). If there is too little water (or detergent), the urine is diluted, but not rinsed away. It is recycled in the wash and dries onto the fabric, remaining there in the form of residues.

Why does my baby have a rash every time I put them in cloth nappies?

You should definitely suspect a urine residue. Ammonia in the nappy will burn tender baby skin!

Urine residues can easily be solved!

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 nappies and covers in the dryer. **Make sure you are washing with enough hot water!!!** If you cannot adjust your machine manually to the highest water level, call the manufacturer. If they cannot instruct you on how to adjust the water level to the highest water level, use the wet towel trick! Decrease the number of nappies you wash per load, and add wet towels to your load in order to trick your machine into adding more water.

Multiple rinses will not work – you must increase the level of water used to wash and rinse your nappies.

If your nappy still smells like ammonia, please call our customer service department at our international toll free number **0808-101-7038**. We would be happy to help you sort it out.