



The Daily Gleaner

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A Green Baby is a Happy Baby

Has anyone noticed the number of expectant mothers around the city lately? I'm starting to think we're having another baby boom! I have a number of friends due within the next few months as well, and after having a conversation with one of them about biodegradable diapers, I began thinking about the topic of raising an eco-friendly baby.

You don't have to think about it for very long to realize how much waste is created in raising an infant: diapers, toys, baby food, baby wipes, on and on. Nevertheless, with the growing number of environmentally-friendly companies and the vast amount of information on the internet, reducing waste and finding eco-friendly solutions is much easier today than it was even ten years ago.

Perhaps the biggest culprit is the disposable diaper; though even cloth diapers have their own weighty ecological footprint, when you consider the amount of water, detergent and electricity used to keep them clean. I was interested to find out from my friend about a couple of new options on the market. *Broody Chick* diapers contain only natural materials: they have no elemental chlorine, perfumes or fragrances and are 100% biodegradable. *G-diapers* are another, similar option. You can put the wet ones right into your backyard composter, which is no more work than tossing a traditional plastic diaper into your garbage. Some products claim to be flushable, but it is not recommended!

Another area where you can reduce waste, save money and have a healthier baby is to make your own baby food. Rather than buying hundreds of tiny individual pre-prepared bottles, buy veggies and fruit in bulk and make several days worth of meals yourself. I found a great website, that not only has a number of healthy recipes, but also talks about preserving and travelling with homemade baby food (www.wholesomebabyfood.com).

Where there are expectant mothers, there are, of course, baby showers. Maybe you are looking to buy a gift for the eco-minded parent but want to give something a little cuter than diapers. For clothing, receiving cloths, blankets, towels, and bibs try to choose items made with 100% unbleached natural and sustainable fibres such as cotton, hemp, wool or bamboo. If you can find organic products, even better! When choosing toys avoid PVC vinyl and toys treated with flame-retardants. Instead go for solid wood, organic cotton and latex free.

Another great idea for both mom and tot are bath and skincare products. Again, there is no shortage these days of eco-friendly products, but as with everything, you need to read the labels to make sure you are getting what you are expecting. Try to avoid products labelled with artificial fragrance, anti-bacterial products, and baby wipes with preservatives and perfumes.

Choose products with little packaging or which are biodegradable - I found a 100% biodegradable baby wipe also put out by *Broody Chick Natural Products*.

Alternatively you can create your own gift, such as one of the following ideas I found on-line: an evening of free babysitting; a home-cooked meal after returning from the hospital; or an hour of watching baby while the new parents take a walk.

When researching the variety of eco-friendly diapers and baby products, I found that many of the companies started out as small “mom & pop” businesses. The increasing demand over the past few years has meant that they have experienced rapid growth and are quickly becoming competitive with large commercial brand companies. Many started their businesses because of concerns they had in raising their own children in a chemical and waste free way.

There are so many things our babies need to get through each day, and they depend completely on us and our choices as parents. And thanks to increasing demand from environmentally conscious shoppers, it is getting much easier to find baby and parent products that are healthy and easy on the planet.

For more information on Broody Chick Natural Products go to their website: www.broodychick.com or visit your nearest Sobeys store. For G-Diapers check out www.gdiapers.com , they are sold locally at *Stylin Mama, Baby & Tot* downtown on York Street.

Valerie Hillier is a Frederictonian who lives with the environment in mind. She encourages you to do the same – one small step at a time. If you would like to contact the Green Matters team email greenmatters@fredericton.ca.