

# Green Parenting Tips

(4 pages)

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## I. Input (Food)

- Make your own baby food from organic fruits and vegetables. It's simple, cheaper, and much healthier for your baby. Just peel then boil/steam fruits or veggies and blend. There is no secret to jarred baby food – it's just pureed, cooked whole foods. Start with first stage foods and then begin mixing as you learn babies likes/dislikes and allergies.
- Green foods= green planet  
Studies show a well designed vegetarian diet is very healthy for infants and children. It is also a great thing for the environment. The average American does more for to reduce his/her carbon footprint by giving up meat than giving up driving a car.
- For a great resource on vegan diets for infants and children, read “Disease Proof Your Child” by Dr. Joel Fuhrman. Dr. Fuhrman's website <http://www.drfuhrman.com/> is also a great resource. I joined as a member and order vitamins and DHA through this site. I have also corresponded directly with Dr. Fuhrman via the Member Center. The book includes numerous recipes for infants, children, and families.
- Breast is Best. Of course, breast milk is the most important part of a baby's diet during the first year. It requires no packaging or shipping either! Studies show that breast milk is very beneficial to children from birth to 2 years old.
- Bottle feeding – glass is back! With the recent scare over toxic plastic baby bottles, the glass bottle is making a comeback. In addition, many companies are producing BPA free plastic bottles. A popular choice is Born Free bottles and sippy cups. For more on safe and environmentally friendly feeding products, go to [www.thesoftlanding.com](http://www.thesoftlanding.com).
- Benefits of making your own baby food:
  - Avoids wasteful packaging, production, and shipping
  - Save money - Buy organic whole foods cheaper than you can buy non-organic jarred baby food
  - Fresh foods provide better nutrition for your little one than canned goods
- Tips:
  - Use a simple food processor or blenders like the Magic Bullet (approx. \$50). The Magic Bullet is great because it is very fast and easy to clean. To see the bullet, go to <http://www.buythebullet.com/>

- Freeze food in ice cube trays for easy serving. Fresh is best, but frozen is better than canned/jarred.
- Make large quantities for the week and serve as needed. I generally make a batch of fruits for breakfast and veggies for lunch/dinner.
- Join a CSA or shop at local Farmer's Markets to buy locally grown foods. Local grocers also offer a variety of organic produce.
- Recipe Ideas
- I generally cook large quantities of fruit or veggie mix and add in rice or oatmeal cereal at serving (Iron fortified baby cereals).
- I also cook "base" foods and add in other items like berries (see below), spinach or avocado. In addition, I add ground cashews (NOT peanuts) and seeds (see below).
- At first, I blended thoroughly, but as the infant grows you can coarsely grind food or simply mash with a fork or potato masher.
  - First Foods: Uncooked
    - Bananas
    - Bananas mixed with avocado (great source of fat, protein, and oils)
  - First Foods: Cooked
    - Apples (w/ or w/o cinnamon)
    - Pears, peaches, plums, mangos, etc
    - Carrots, peas, green beans, sweet potatoes, potatoes, spinach, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, etc.). Add some spinach to sweet potatoes or carrots for a great source of iron.
  - After 9 months: Uncooked
    - Mix blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, and raspberries in with other fruits (i.e. bananas and strawberries, apples and blueberries)
  - After 1 year
    - Grind cashews or almonds (organic) in a coffee grinder or Vita Mix (high powered blender) until finely powdered. Sprinkle up to 2 ounces per day in the child's food. You can also grind flax, sunflower, or sesame seeds into this mix. This provides a great source of protein, fat, and nutrients. Consult your pediatrician before introducing these foods. Never give peanuts to children under age 3. Be sure they are finely ground. I prefer cashews to almonds because they are softer and easier to get to powder form.

## II. Output (Diapers)

- You don't have to choose between Huggies and Pampers – there are great green alternatives to disposable diapers. Cloth diapers have advanced from folding and pins to pockets and Velcro in darling little designs. G-diapers are a revolutionary new flushable diaper that is arguably the most environmentally friendly way to deal with baby's emissions.
- Why disposables are bad: 18-23 billion disposables end up in American landfills each year, making them the 3<sup>rd</sup> most common consumer item in our waste system. Considering only about 5% of households uses disposable diapers, that's a staggering statistic. It takes hundreds of years (thousands?) for disposables to decompose and they leak dangerous toxins into landfills. Technically, human waste should be

scraped from disposables before being thrown out, but this is rarely practiced. Furthermore, the production of disposables is often very complex and creates many environmental burdens.

- Cloth diapered babies potty train sooner. This means that while a cloth diapered baby uses approximately 5-6,000 diapers a disposable diapered baby will use more like 8,000 diapers during those first few years.
- Cloth diapers laundered in energy efficient front-loading machines will use approximately 10,000 gallons of water over the average 2.5 year period of diaper changing. Top loading machines will use about twice as much water. This water must also be heated to about 140 degrees F, using more energy.
- Cloth diapers are often made from sustainable materials like bamboo and non-toxic cottons.
- Cloth diaper websites: <http://www.bumgenius.com/>, <http://www.clothbabies.com/>, and <http://www.cottonbabies.com/?gclid=CI2E14O2wJUCFQZqswods4hQg>.
- Flushable G-Diapers are considered environmentally neutral or even positive. The advantage to G-Diapers are numerous:
  - Poop goes down the toilet, where it should. Human waste should not be thrown into landfills – it is a health and environmental hazard.
  - G-Diapers wet refills can be composted at home.
  - Flushed g-diapers send waste and natural fiber products (the paper refills) into the sewage system. These products are filtered from the water and can be used as fertilizer.
  - G-Diapers shells and liners do not need to be washed with each changing and therefore require less energy to upkeep.
  - G-Diapers are made from breathable materials, which reduces diaper rash and the need for diaper rash products.
  - G-Diapers are made from sustainable materials and in a fair trade factory.
  - G-Diapers are a certified Cradle to Cradle product, which measures environmentally friendly design. They are the only Baby Care product listed as certified.
  - Find out more at [www.gdiapers.com](http://www.gdiapers.com)

### III. **Baby Gear**

- The options for buying baby gear and toys are pretty much endless. From toys to strollers to clothes, there are many ways to spend money gearing up baby! The fact is, babies don't care what they wear and are generally just as happy to play with the box the toy came in over the toy itself. Here are some tips for environmentally friendly baby shopping:
- Buy second hand. Babies and kids go through clothes and toys fast, which means they don't get a lot of wear and tear. Look for hand-me-downs from relatives and friends with older kids. In addition, there are great items available at local thrift stores and second hand stores. In Cortland, we have the Pumpkin Patch on Main Street. Ithaca has Mama Goose, a great second hand store for all things baby (they also sell cloth diapers). You can also get great deals on ebay or Craigslist, which have specific categories for baby and kids. New moms can even register at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and include the option for second hand items in their baby registry.

- Buy sustainable products – like wood toys. Check out <http://woodentoys.com/> and <http://www.treehollowtoys.com/usamade.html>. Examine where they are made (Made in USA reduces overall carbon footprint) and how they are produced.
- Use eco-friendly baby care products like lotion, soap, and powder. Babies generally don't need a lot of cleaning and lathering. In fact, many “safe” baby products actually contain harmful chemicals that are banned in Europe. For safe and natural baby products, try the Little Twig line of lotions and soaps at <http://www.littletwig.com/>. You can also use mild Dr. Brommer's soaps for the entire family.
- Buy organic fibers. Organically produced baby bedding and clothing are becoming much more popular and available. These products can be found at Babies R Us, Target, Kohl's and other stores. In addition, you can find them online at <http://www.greenedgekids.com/?gclid=CKj6g7G5wJUCFQMtswodMSMlQA>, <http://www.happygreenbaby.com/eco-friendly-baby-clothes.html?gclid=CM2ZuNO5wJUCFQZlswodVFPYRA> and [www.hannaanderson.com](http://www.hannaanderson.com).