



Getting to the Bottom of It!

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and then respond to the questions.

There was a time when every baby wore cloth diapers, but disposable diapers have almost completely taken over the diaper business, putting diaper services out of business and relegating cloth diaper use to a fringe “lifestyle choice,” rather than a necessity. The first disposable diaper, made in Sweden in 1942, was composed of many layers of tissue paper and was good for about one wetting before it needed to be changed. By the 1960s, the absorbent core was made of a pulp mill, and they became more popular with families that could afford them.

However, disposable diapers did introduce problems. It takes a lot of processing to make them, and it is estimated that they will remain intact in landfills for an estimated 500 years. Also, since they pull moisture away from the baby, the baby doesn’t always realize he is wet, which can delay toilet training. Children that don’t toilet train until after the age of three use an estimated 8,000 diapers, meaning that while cloth diapers are much more expensive to purchase initially, the disposable diapers actually cost a great deal more over infancy and toddlerhood. Because of the processing, disposable diapers are also unintentionally laced with chemicals that help improve absorbency and keep babies drier, and these can be a skin irritant.

1. What is the **main idea** of the passage?

- A. disposable diapers are convenient
- B. the history of diapers
- C. disposable diapers are convenient, but not without problems.

3. How many years will it take a disposable diaper to decompose?

- A. 250
- B. 500
- C. 1000

2. What was the first disposable diaper made of?

- A. cloth
- B. layers of tissue
- C. pulp mill

4. What is the economic impact of disposable diapers pulling wetness away from the baby?

