

For parents of children aged 0-36 months

The most important years of their lives

Baby years

**A Parent's
Primer**

Is your child
ready for
preschool?

PILLOW TALK

DOES YOUR CHILD
NEED A NAP?

9 WAYS

TO MAKE DOCTOR'S
VISITS ENJOYABLE

GERMBUSTERS!
The ABCs of Germs

time-outs!
do they work for toddlers?



MONEY MANAGEMENT

ADVICE FROM STAY-AT-HOME MOMS



organic options

BY NANCY VONDRAK

It seems like every year, we vow to begin living a healthier lifestyle. Buying organic products for our children, as well as for ourselves, can be a first step toward making that healthy lifestyle a reality. Parents need to be educated consumers to know what organic baby products are available and where to purchase them.

Natural Alternatives for Baby



Buying Organic – What and Why

Organic products have been around long enough to make the term “organic” more than just a trendy buzzword. In the simplest sense, organic refers to products made with crops that are grown without using chemicals on the soil, on plants or on the harvested products. →

Experts see organic farming as a health, social and environmental issue. The absence of agricultural chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers makes organically-grown crops healthier for those who use them as well as for those who grow them – and also for our planet.

“Standard farming methods deplete the soil of nutrients. Organic methods build nutrients in the soil,” says Jim Toth, president of Northern Ohio Windstar, a non-profit organization that promotes holistic health and environmental awareness.

The World of Organic Foods

Because of the health and environmental benefits, Toth and his wife, Dr. Ana Hirsch, consume only organic produce. “We want the optimum nutrition and the minimum amount of toxins so we choose organic foods,” Toth says.

In addition to increased nutritional value, organic foods and juices tend to be more flavorful and can prevent health problems caused by toxic chemicals. “Parents should be aware that children are much more susceptible to toxins than adults are,” says Toth. “Because they are growing they are at greater risk that these toxins can disrupt their hormone and endocrine systems.”

Although they may cost more, Toth and Hirsch feel health is a good investment. “In the long run organic foods save money because they help maintain health. Prevention is much less expensive than cure,” Toth says.

Because of pesticides and additives, some important organic foods to purchase for babies include organic baby foods, milk and butter, strawberries, bananas, peaches and apples. “Strawberries that aren’t organically grown have one of the highest residue levels of pesticides and are not a good choice,” says Toth.

Lisa Clark, R.N., a pediatric nurse from Sagamore Hills, Ohio, switched her family to organic milk upon recommendation from Dr. Hirsch. “We drink it because no pesticides or chemicals are used in the food that the cows drink,” she says. “Also the cows aren’t given growth hormones

or antibiotics. Anything that is given to cows is passed on to us through cows’ breastmilk.” As a nurse, Clark is familiar with studies showing that these substances in milk pose a risk of breast and colon cancer.

While purchasing organic foods may conjure thoughts of trekking to specialty health food stores, many organic brands are becoming available in local supermarkets. Alternatively you can shop online at sites like Earth’s Best and Eden Foods.

More Than Just Food

Other organic baby products available today include organic diapers, clothing, bedding and toys. Although some retail stores may carry these products, online shopping may provide access to a greater number of companies selling organic baby products. Two Web sites of companies specializing in organic baby products are www.ecobaby.com and www.organicbebe.com. From baby foods and organic juices to vitamins and cloth diapers, these online stores can be a one-stop shop for all your organic needs.

While the cloth vs. disposable diaper controversy has been around for eons, organic cotton diapers may be an alternative for some parents because they are unbleached and untreated. This produces a diaper of a different hue that is comparable to a muted off-white. “More chemicals are used to grow cotton than on most crops,” says Toth. “However, organic cotton has a lot less of an impact on the environment. Commercially-grown cotton has been treated with pesticides and chemicals that can cause problems such as allergies and skin rashes.”

All types of organic cotton clothing are available for both babies and adults. Because only natural dyes are used, the clothing’s colors may also be more muted.

Dan and Nancy Bender of Sagamore Hills, Ohio purchased organic bedding for their 6-year-old son, Noah, because of his inhalant allergies that include dust, mold, and cat and dog hair and dander.

“Noah has an organic mattress, box springs, mattress pad and pillow made of 100 percent organic cotton and wool,” says Nancy Bender. “The wool keeps away bed and dust

baby steps to going organic

Here are some easy steps parents can take to provide a more natural environment for their babies:

1. Grow your own vegetables and fruits without using chemicals.
2. Make your own baby foods and juices from organically-grown produce.
3. Use cloth diapers instead of disposables.
4. Buy 100% cotton clothing. Avoid polyester.
5. Use a small amount of soap, water and a washcloth instead of baby wipes.
6. Eat peeled apples and cucumbers if they have not been organically grown.
7. Use natural cleaners such as white distilled vinegar or baking soda.

mites that tend to creep in. They're repelled by the wool," adds Dan Bender.

Although the Benders were aware of the environmental movement toward organic living before they became parents, they greatly increased their consumption of organic products after Noah's allergies were confirmed at age 3. Nancy credits Noah's natural bedroom as one of the reasons some of his allergy symptoms such as red ears, itchy nose and bedtime cough have disappeared.

Organic baby toys include all-wood infant rattles, crib gyms and mobiles. Advocates for organic products encourage no PVC in children's toys, which is contained in plastics. "Petro chemicals in plastic toys are what make them toxic," says Dan Bender.

Stuffed toys made of organic cotton and wool are safe for children to sleep with or suck on since they have no harmful toxins. Even crayons made of beeswax and colored with environmentally sound coloring are also available.

Clean Clean-up

Organic cleaning products offer a way to help parents de-toxify their baby's environment. While many chemical-free cleaners are on the market today, the Benders have found an easier solution. "We use a back-to-basics approach incorporating simple ingredients that your grandmother might have used," says Dan Bender.

They've found that white distilled vinegar can be used to clean glass, floors, tile, etc. "It cleans almost anything!" says Nancy Bender. She recommends using one part vinegar to three parts water. She has also found baking soda to be a great cleanser and uses Borax to wash clothes.

"Kids today are exposed to toxins so much more than we were, and their immune systems aren't being allowed to fully develop," says Dan Bender. "They're being hit with toxins and chemicals that didn't exist 30 years ago." 🌱

About the Author: Nancy Vondrak is an Ohio-based contributing writer for iParenting Media.

Certified Organic

The federal government set out to create a national standard for organic food certification in 1990 with the Organic Food Production Act. Though the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) was established as a result, there is still no single industry-wide standard for organic production. Today, more than 6,000 farmers and 800 handlers are certified by one of 33 private or 11 state agencies, and more than 2.5 million American families regularly choose to buy organic products.

Organic Bébé



Natural Products For Babies, Children & Mothers

- Earth's Best Organic Baby Food
- Baby's Only Organic Formula
- Organic Cotton Bedding
- Organic Cotton Clothing
- Natural Skin Care
- Cloth Diapers
- Baby Joggers
- Co-Sleepers
- High Chairs
- Baby Carriers
- Educational Toys
- Children's Furniture
- Breastfeeding Accessories
- Vitamins & Alternative Medicines
- Organic Cotton Feminine Products



Gift Registry Available • Free Catalog

Toll-Free 866-734-2634

www.organicbebe.com