

AN INTRODUCTION TO ADULT DIAPERS THEIR SELECTION AND WEAR©

By John Davis
March 2015

ORGANIZATION OF THIS PAPER

This paper is organized into the following topics:	Page
How This Started	2
What to Expect	3
How We Pee	3
Embarrassment	4
Urinary Incontinence	4
Fecal (Bowel) Incontinence	5
Confusing Terminology	5
Products	5
Lighter Protection	6
Cloth Versus Disposable Diapers	6
Wearing Wet Versus Dry	6
The Disposable “Diaper”	7
Pullups Versus Taped Diapers	7
Taped Diapers	9
Absorbency	12
Cloth Diapers	13
Diapers and Bowel Incontinence	13
Limited Mobility or Dexterity and Diapers	16
Booster Pads	18
Common Diaper Problems	19
Odor	19
Need for Multiple Types of Diapers	20
What do I Use?	20
Tapes Coming Loose?	21
Let ‘Em Hang	21
Shake It Out	21
Diaper Covers	22
“Stealth” Diapering (Concealment)	24
Where the Diaper Holds the Liquid	25
Diaper Sag	25
For Guys Only – Diapering “Up” or “Down”	26
For Gals Only (various topics)	26
Rashes	27
Chaffing	29
Internal Deodorants	30
Stealth “Diaper Bag”	30
“Disaster” Kit	30

Good Brands	30
Specific Recommended Diapers	30
Other Ultra-High Absorbency Diapers	32
Buying Diapers	33
Recommended Vendors	34
Cost	34
Buying Diaper Covers	34
How to Put on a Diaper (self-diapering)	35
Practice Makes Perfect	35
Absorbent Pads (Chux)	36
Wearing Diapers Outside the Home	36
When to Change?	36
How Close Are You to a Leak?	37
Daytime Diaper Carry	37
Changing Away from Home	38
Leaks and Cleaning Up	38
Bowel Accidents While Away from Home	38
Shaving “Down There”	39
Travel in Diapers	39
Swim Diapers	44
Mattress Protection	45
Diaper Storage Space	45
Do Diapers Expire?	45
“AB/DL”	45
Recommended Sources of Information	46
Internet Support Groups	46
Special Thanks	46

HOW THIS STARTED

As I have moderate fecal (bowel) incontinence and some urinary incontinence, I wear diapers 24/7. When I first began wearing diapers and needed information quickly, I was frustrated that it was so difficult to find detailed, specific, and useful information about practical everyday issues involving incontinence and diapers. While your doctor or pharmacist may try to be helpful, he probably does not have this practical knowledge about actually living with the problem. When a friend who knew I wore diapers asked for information to help an aging parent who was newly wearing diapers and having a rough time, I began writing this paper. Most of the “wisdom” in this paper, if any, results from correcting my own mistakes.

Your medical and health situation is something you have no control over and is not your fault. Although I respect the sensitivities of the many who are embarrassed about their condition, acceptance is an important part of coping with the problem. Your bladder or bowel leakage does not make you any less of a mature adult. In this paper I will call a diaper a “diaper.” I will make no attempt to be in denial or to be “PC” by calling a diaper a “brief” or “absorbent

underwear,” as the product advertisements do. As we are discussing adult “diapers” and wearing adult “diapers,” it is necessary to become accustomed to the terminology.

Below, I try to provide useful information organized in general categories and topics. As most readers of this paper probably will only recently be wearing diapers, and need somewhere to start, I am providing a very personal and opinionated point-of-view, with recommendations, from my own experience. Due to very helpful reader feedback, the scope of the original paper has been expanded to include a major section on travel in diapers; mobility and flexibility issues and diapers; women’s concerns; lighter forms of protection; swim diapers, plastic pants, and more.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Anyone can put on an adult diaper. However, if you need, and choose, to wear an adult diaper, there is a learning curve to doing so well and effectively. Most new users of adult diapers need to learn simple skills about how to avoid leaks, how to contain odor, how to change a messy diaper in a public restroom, how to avoid skin rashes, which diapers are best for their needs, which diaper covers (plastic pants) are best, how to handle diaper sag, and how to hide the fact that you are wearing a diaper. Despite anyone’s advice, if you want to get it right, you should expect a steep learning curve as you initially experiment with diapers. Experimentation is essential to find what works for you personally. At first you may go through a rough period, but it gets better with time and experience as you learn the tricks necessary to cope. Getting it “right” is what gives you confidence and freedom of mind.

HOW WE PEE

Before discussing diapers, it is helpful to understand how much we typically pee in a day and how much at a time. This varies markedly from one person to the next based on many factors, including gender, age, body chemistry, medications, and the type and amount of fluid consumed, but the average adult produces between 1 quart (32 ounces) and 2 quarts (64 ounces) of urine per day, with 1.5 quarts (48 ounces) listed as being the average.

Medical sources indicate that the bladder can hold 16 ounces of urine comfortably. Although the bladder can hold more, the desire to urinate usually begins when it contains between 5 – 12 ounces, typically about 7 - 8 ounces. At 14 ounces we really need to “go. Some sources say that normal urination is about 16 ounces.

We usually urinate every 2 to 3 hours a day, except at night when we produce less urine.

Urinary output per hour is highly variable, but about 2 - 2.5 ounces per hour for most people, when awake, and less when sleeping. However, when well hydrated, a quart of fluid can pass through the body in about 2 to 3 hours. That could mean 12 or more ounces per hour! When overhydrated, I have soaked a ConfiDry 24/7 with a NorthShore Dare medium booster (15 oz capacity) in only 2 1/2 hours! Bear this in mind when selecting which diaper to wear for a pre-game beer fest with your buddies or all that ice-cold tea on a hot summer picnic.

Some who are incontinent urinate in frequent “dribbles” of small quantities of urine at a time.

The position in which you wear, and urinate in, the diaper - standing or sitting, or lying down also affects where the urine is absorbed in the diaper and when, or whether, the diaper will leak.

These above factors affect how we select, and use, an adult diaper.

EMBARRASSMENT

Initially, almost everyone finds having to wear a diaper to be strange and embarrassing. We fear that losing control of our private functions has made us less of an adult and that others may consider us to have become more childish because of our incontinence. It takes a while to reach acceptance that it is nothing over which we have any control, is not our fault, and does not diminish our adulthood. It is unfortunate that there is a social stigma against incontinence and having to wear adult diapers.

All new diaper wearers are highly anxious that others will be able to tell that they are wearing a diaper. It becomes easier with time and experience. Don't make the newbie mistake of acting visibly anxious about your diaper. Frequently patting or touching the diaper area to see whether it has slipped or whether it is bulging will attract attention and could be a give away your secret.

URINARY INCONTINENCE

More women than men suffer from urinary incontinence, but, with age, both sexes are affected. Initially many women use feminine hygiene products, then graduate, as necessary, to incontinence pads, liners, and pullups.

The type and symptoms of urinary incontinence (IC) affect the choice of an absorbent product. The two most common categories of IC are “urge” and “stress” incontinence.

“Urge” incontinence –sudden urinary urges cause an irresistible and involuntary release of urine, often in a “flood.” A “flood” may temporarily overwhelm the diaper (faster than it can absorb) and cause a leak. If one has any voluntary

control, it helps to interrupt the flow for several minutes to allow the diaper to absorb before completing the urination. Urge incontinence often is due to physical damage to the nerves that control urination. Urge incontinence also is called “overactive bladder” or OAB.

“Stress” incontinence – stress in the form of coughing, laughing, or physical exertion prompts bladder distension and causes urination. Many people urinate in “dribbles” of small quantities of urine at a time, often unaware of the event.

FECAL (BOWEL) INCONTINENCE

As fewer of us have fecal incontinence (FI), I had greater difficulty in finding useful information about living with this condition. If you have bowel incontinence, you probably will look for a good disposable diaper that is suitable for bowel. Adult cloth diapers can be very effective at containing feces, but are extremely difficult for someone with bowel incontinence to clean and maintain. Disposable diapers are more practical.

No disposable diapers are designed solely for bowel incontinence, but many of the better ones are designed to handle both urine and feces. A few do a fairly good job with the latter and I shall discuss them below.

In my opinion, no typical drug store diaper is adequate for someone with bowel incontinence. Period. Accordingly, you should be ordering from a medical supply house or a retailer specializing in incontinence or diapers. In the long run you will get better quality diapers and at a lower price.

Anyone who is fecal incontinent has two separate problems - fecal containment and fecal odor. Keep this in mind while reading below.

CONFUSING TERMINOLOGY

The terminology found in stores and in advertising as refers to diapers is confusing. There is a code. As a marketing ploy, advertisers avoid using the term “diaper” when selling absorbent products to adults. Instead, they use the term “protective underwear” to refer to pullup style diapers. They use the term “briefs” to mean taped flat diapers. They use the term “absorbent products” to refer to both, plus other products intended for light incontinence.

PRODUCTS

So-called “diapers” consist of pullups and taped diapers (what I refer to as diapers). Male “guards”, pads, and “absorbent underwear” are available and may be suitable for very light incontinence. For those with light urinary incontinence a quality pullup may suffice. However, for all but the lightest urinary incontinence real diapers usually are best.

LIGHTER PROTECTION

Not everyone needs the absorbency of heavy-duty taped diapers. Pads, liners, and guards are designed for light incontinence and are worn inside ordinary underwear. Various absorbencies are available. "Guards" are for men. Mesh pants help to hold a light liner in place. Mesh offers excellent air circulation but also transmits odor. This combination is very concealable under thin or tight clothing.

CLOTH VERSUS DISPOSABLE DIAPERS

Adult cloth diapers can be more effective at containing leaks than many disposable diapers and are preferred by many for use overnight due both to their absorbency and their effectiveness in any sleeping position. Cloth diapers wick the liquid much further throughout the fabric, being more efficient at this than disposable diapers. Cloth diapers are flexible as they can be layered as necessary to achieve the necessary absorbency for heavy urinary incontinence.

Adult cloth diapers are available as flat shaped diapers to be fastened with diaper pins, or ready to be secured with Velcro. Some are available as all-in-one designs, with a waterproof, but breathable, PUL outer layer built in.

Disadvantages of cloth diapers include their greater bulkiness, odor from the storage of wet or messy diapers, and the necessary laundering. Cloth diapers will accumulate urine odor over time, despite normal laundering and periodically will need to be treated to change the dried urine compound into one that is water-soluble.

Due to the bulkiness of cloth diapers, they are more difficult to conceal. Accordingly, many users wear them only at home, particularly at night.

For side sleepers, most disposable diapers will tend to leak at night as the side position permits urine to flow where there is the least amount of absorbent mat. Cloth diapers do better in this regard as they wick urine so well throughout the diaper. Unless you are bowel incontinent, you may wish just to use a cloth diaper at night.

Cloth diapers initially are more expensive, but may be less costly in the long run than good quality disposable diapers.

WEARING WET VERSUS DRY

Your decision affects the choice of a diaper. It comes down to personal preference. The issue is whether to change after each wetting (urination) or to wear the wet diaper to, or near, its maximum capacity.

It is MUCH more expensive to change diapers after each wetting. Modern quality diapers are designed, and intended, to be worn for multiple wettings. The engineering of a quality diaper is such that the liquid will be absorbed from the white outer absorbent mat into an inner gel that prevents the liquid from leaking back out. That leaves the outer absorbent mat feeling “dry” to the wearer. You can touch the mat of a good-quality used diaper and your hand will come away without being wet.

THE DISPOSABLE “DIAPER”

A good fit is absolutely critical. The most expensive premium disposable diaper cannot do its job if it does not fit your personal anatomy well. For a correct size - with the back top of the diaper over hips, the front absorbent mat (not the top of the plastic) should come up to the navel. After taping, the excess plastic then is folded into the waist. There also should be good overlap of the side wings and the front so that you do not have to twist to grab the tapes to attach them. There is considerable variance between brands and individual diapers in this regard. For better fit and taping, it usually is recommended to “size up.” That is, if you are near the upper limit of a diaper’s recommended waist line, it usually is best to order the next larger size as it is necessary to have sufficient extra diaper from the side “wings” to overlap before the tapes are secured. For many brands, disposable diapers come in varying levels of absorbency, with the more absorbent diapers being more expensive. Also, there is considerable variation in how far the absorbent mat comes up in the front and extends into the sides and wings.

PULLUPS VERSUS TAPED DIAPERS

In the code used by diaper manufacturers, “protective underwear” usually means pull-ups. Pullups are popular, convenient, and satisfactory for very small leakage or light urinary incontinence. As a rule, pullups absorb less, and leak more, than taped diapers, but may meet your needs. Pullups are not adequate for bowel incontinence. I would prefer those pullups that have internal standing leak guards. As with all diapers, fit is critical. A small booster pad can be added to a pullup to increase its absorbent capacity.

Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find taped diapers in local drug stores. In a recent visit to a local drug store, the only “absorbent products” on the shelves were pullups

Despite my preference for taped diapers vice pullups for fecal incontinence or for moderate or more severe UI, pullups are available that may provide the best solution for those with light incontinence, or for many with impaired mobility or dexterity. It is far easier to put on a pullup than to fasten a taped diaper.

Almost all pullups are breathable (not plastic backed). Most pullups consist of matting in the front, crotch, and rear with a thin, breathable layer of material that forms the actual pant of the pullup. This very thin and stretchable breathable material can appear to many males as somewhat “frilly” or “feminine.” This characteristic is the reason so many men are averse to wearing traditional pull-ups. Pullups like the Depends Real Fit are popular with men who are recently incontinent because they resemble common men’s jockey-style underpants. However, in order to achieve their style, these pullups sacrifice function. The Depends Real Fit is rated as holding 16 oz. If you need more absorbency, it is available in other brands and styles of pullups.

My three preferred brands of pullups are the Abena Abriflex, Tranquility Premium Overnight, and the NorthShore Care Flex Supreme. In my experimentation (of course, I have not tested them all), the pullups that come the closest to the effectiveness of taped diapers are the Abena Abriflex and the “Tranquility Premium Overnight.”

The Tranquility pullup has good leak guards and elastic leg gathers (more on this below). Although it is billed as an “overnight” diaper, I would wear it during the day for light bladder incontinence. Its maximum absorbent capacity is 34 ounces and you could add more useable absorbency with a small booster pad! Good prices on the Tranquility pullup are available from Magic Medical. Although I like both the Tranquility and Abena pullups, I usually wear the Tranquility when I use a pullup, mostly because it fits me slightly better. General pullup diaper characteristics are discussed below with taped diapers.

The Abena pullup, made in Denmark, is very well made and has markedly higher mat in the front than the NorthShore pull-up. In size large it holds 37 oz. It has a good fit for male anatomy while not being so wide in the crotch as to be uncomfortable for females. This pullup still is very thin and concealable. It has a noticeably fuller cut than the NorthShore pullup - and is not so narrow on the sides.

Re the NorthShore Care pullup, it is almost impossible to detect the sides of this diaper when worn under clothing – a characteristic that should appeal to women with light incontinence and who are seeking an extremely concealable solution. The NorthShore pullup is very “frilly.” I thought that it felt flimsy and was shaped more like a woman’s panty, which, of course, will appeal to women. One highly experienced woman felt that it tears too easily. The width of the crotch is narrow, which should appeal more to women as some men may find that it does not encompass their genitals adequately. The sizing (for size Large) ran small for me. The absorbent mat began fairly low in the front, so low that I was concerned that, if were flooding, some urine might leak over the top of the mat. I was left with the impression that women were the target market for this item. However, on a positive note, the NorthShore pullup is well constructed and has standing internal leak guards!

One female contributor wears a cotton Abena fixing pant over her pullup when she is away from home to hold up the pullup. Also, if she has to change the pullup, she can use a large liner alone with the fixing pant to hold it in place for a limited period until she returns home. She notes, however, that the liners without adhesive tend to slip, despite the fixing pants. If she is going to be away from home for an extended period she may wear PUL pants, instead.

TAPED DIAPERS

Almost all with persons with severe or heavy urinary incontinence, or with bowel incontinence, wear only taped diapers.

Some diapers are designed for so-called “daytime” use or lighter incontinence. They have less overall absorbency and often are thinner. Their absorbent matting usually does not extend into the front and back side panels and does not come up as high in front. Other diapers are intended specifically for nighttime or for heavy incontinence. Their absorbent pad will extend into the front and back wings and there is much more matting, both in the front and rear.

Shell (backing)

Most diapers have either a plastic outer shell or breathable cloth-like backing. A few are hybrids.

Increasingly, most of the diapers on the market today have a cloth-like backing or shell that is breathable. This is both good and bad. The improved air circulation can help to prevent rashes, however it also transmits more odor from both urine and feces. The breathable cloth-like shell, although comfortable, stretches more than a plastic shell. This can cause a snugly taped diaper to loosen considerably at the waist and then sag, particularly as the diaper absorbs urine and becomes heavy. Breathable diapers need more support to counter stretch and sag than plastic backed diapers. The Velcro-type tapes found on most breathable diapers can be reattached if they are removed for a bowel movement, but often will not stick as securely once reattached. It can be helpful to reinforce the tapes. Even when the diaper does not leak, “per se,” the cloth-like shell sometimes can wick wetness to clothing or furniture.

Diapers with an all-plastic shell will not wick wetness and do not transmit odor like those with a breathable backing. Diapers with plastic shells do not stretch as much as cloth-like shell. The tapes stick more securely to a plastic shell but are more difficult to remove and refasten. Unfortunately, most plastic-backed diapers have to be ordered either from a retail store such as Walmart or online.

Some diapers are hybrids, with a plastic or non-breathable cloth-like shell that covers the absorbent mat in the front, crotch, and rear, but with breathable cloth-

like side panels. The hybrid diaper is a compromise of the best and worse of the two types. They may feel cooler and more comfortable than diapers with all-plastic shells but warmer than many with all-breathable shells. A distinct advantage is that there will be no wicking from the mat through the non-breathable portion of the shell. Also, they will not stretch quite as much as all-cloth-like shells. A disadvantage is that odor, particularly fecal odor, will be transmitted through the breathable side panels, although they will transmit less than all-breathable shells.

Non-woven layer

A thin non-woven layer is the upper layer of the inside of the diaper that is in contact with your skin. This is a wicking layer that acquires the urine and lets it pass through to the core where it is absorbed. This leaves the skin feeling dry.

The core (absorbent mat)

The core is where the absorbing action takes place. This is a (usually) white mat with a (sometimes) colored center section consisting of fluffed pulp and Super Absorbent Polymer (SAP). It is important to note that you cannot judge a diaper's absorbency by its thickness alone. Cheap diapers tend to contain more fluff and less SAP.

Fluff

The top part of the core consists of a combination of fluffed pulp (fluffed wood pulp) and a core of SAP. The SAP (discussed below) is supposed to absorb the urine from the fluff and lock it in. Fluffed pulp makes a diaper thick. Although it is thick, it does not have very much absorbent capacity. Fluff, however, has the advantage of fast absorption. Fluffed pulp is inexpensive to use but bulky, particularly as it absorbs fluid. The fluff wicks liquid to distribute it over a larger surface and that improves absorption. Unfortunately, the fluff does not lock in the urine. Under pressure, as when you sit down, a small amount of liquid can be pressed back out of the fluff. Good diaper reviews will note the "press-out" in ounces. Some reviews of diaper performance will note how many ounces of liquid are absorbed in a minute. Rate of absorption also is called "rate of acquisition." Someone who is UI "urge" incontinent and "floods" the diaper with urine needs more pulp in the diaper for faster absorption. The pulp then will transfer the liquid to the SAP at a slower rate.

SAP

The diaper core usually contains an area with a thin layer of highly absorbent SAP (Super Absorbent Polymer) crystals that can hold much more urine than the pulp. The use of SAP enables a diaper to be thin. SAP crystals can absorb as much as 50 or more times their weight in urine (and even more in plain distilled water). SAP absorbs the liquid, turns into a gel, and locks the liquid in so that it cannot leak back out to the fluff. SAP has a much slower rate of absorption than pulp but allows a much thinner layer to be used. The SAP may be mixed with some fluff to hold it in place. Someone who is UI and "dribbles" smaller amounts

of urine at intervals can use more SAP for slower but greater total absorption and less pulp.

Fecal Containment

Some diapers have a small depression or pouch between the leak guards and engineered into the bottom of the diaper to receive and contain feces. This “zone” provides a space to allow for the expelling of feces as well as their containment. This space is important as, when sitting down, it allows room for feces to shift under pressure without forcing itself out the top of the leg gathers or up the back. If a diaper without such a containment space is fastened too snugly - so that it essentially is flat and tight across the bottom – it leaves nowhere for the feces to go - except out of the diaper.

Leak guards (gutter guards)

Good quality diapers have internal leak guards or leg cuffs. The higher and stiffer the leak guards the better. Leak guards help direct the flow of urine to keep in in the main channel of the diaper regardless of your body position. The leak guards also play a major role in containing stool. As they usually consist of a mesh strip of material that resists the passage of urine, they also help to control “floods” while the urine is being absorbed. Indirectly they also help reduce odor by keeping fecal material away from the leg gathers.

Leg gathers

Elastic leg gathers are the primary defense against leaks of urine or fecal material. The diaper should fit snugly so that the leak guards and elastic leg gathers remain in contact with the skin. If the leak guards fail to contain fecal material, the leg gathers are the last resort. For urine, the leg gathers must contain the liquid until enough time has passed for it to be absorbed by the mat. Again, the higher the leg gathers the better. Although almost all diapers have elastic leg gathers, some are not very effective.

Tapes

Most diapers have four plastic tapes, two on each side. Some tapes are double tapes, consisting of two-layers, one on top of the other, to facilitate re-taping. Initially, they are taped together as one, with the base tape (the tape on the bottom) adhering to the plastic of the diaper shell. The bottom “base” tape often is blue in color. To detach the tapes for readjusting or a bowel movement, peel the topmost white tape off of the blue base, leaving the base tape in place. To reattach it, tape the white tape back on top of the blue tape (a little harder than it sounds), or elsewhere on the diaper shell (although then you will not be able to re-tape the diaper again). This also will allow adjusting the tapes to account for stretch (especially with breathable diapers). For those who fecal incontinent, or are urinary incontinent but are able to pee in the toilet, at least part of the time, double tapes are very helpful. As many men may pee by pulling the penis under the leg gathers, double tapes may be even more helpful for women, as the

women usually untape, and then retape, the diaper (unless they merely slide the intact diaper down over their legs, then back up without detaching the tapes).

An easier solution is found in diapers that have a plastic tape “landing zone” panel across the upper front of the diaper. The “landing zone” allows the tapes to be placed anywhere on its surface. Tapes then may be unfastened from the “landing zone” and reattached, multiple times. The downside to the landing zone is that the stiffer plastic can be louder than the rest of the plastic used in the diaper.

Elastic waistband

Some good diapers have an elastic waistband. In my experience, this is a nice-to-have feature, but not necessary, as a properly taped diaper will not slip down over the hips.

Wetness indicator

Many diapers have a wetness indicator in the form of a stripe or pattern that appears or disappears as the absorbent mat becomes saturated. This is nice-to-have but primarily is for use by caregivers, rather than the diaper wearer.

Deodorizer

A deodorizing chemical is built into the absorbent mat in most quality diapers. This primarily counters urine odor.

ABSORBENCY

The ratings of diapers for maximum absorbency can be misleading. As users urinate in the front and lower crotch area of the diaper, and as most diaper absorbent mats have limited capability, much of the diaper’s absorbent mat never becomes saturated before the diaper begins to leak from the crotch or legs. More specifically, some of the upper front and most of the upper rear and back is underused or not used. As much as 40-60% of the total absorbent mat may not be used [the exception is those who urinate while lying down on their backs.] Therefore, if it were desired that a diaper be adequate for at least two wettings, equal to a total of 20 ounces of liquid, a diaper with a maximum capacity of only 20 ounces would not be sufficient. Diapers with a lower total absorbent capacity, but that wick well, may have a higher working capacity than other diapers with a higher capacity but which do not use the absorbent mat as effectively.

Sheer capacity is not the only issue. You must also consider the rate of absorption (acquisition rate). XP Medical has measured the diaper rates of acquisition for premium diapers and found them to vary from 1.9 oz/min to 12.8 oz/min, with the median being around 5 oz/min. Diapers with a fast rate of absorption are less likely to leak before the absorbent mat has had time to do its work. This particularly is important with individuals who are physically active. Diapers with a greater absorbent capacity but which have a slower rate of

absorption may be better for those who frequently dribble smaller amounts of urine.

CLOTH DIAPERS

These can be conventional square cloth diapers fastened by pins or newer shaped diapers fastened with Velcro strips. They also can be purchased with a built in plastic or PUL outer shell to avoid the need for a separate diaper cover. They have the advantage of being reusable. They initially are expensive but are cheaper than quality disposables in the long run.

One advantage of conventional flat cloth diapers is that the user can add additional layers for heavy incontinence to achieve exactly the amount of absorbency required.

At night, a cloth diaper can be secured over of a disposable diaper to catch any leaks from the disposable and avoid a wet bed. This can be thought of as the “belt and suspenders” approach to diapering. As long as there are no leaks, the cloth diaper can be used repeatedly, without laundering. Even a relatively thin cloth diaper should be effective when used over a high-absorbency disposable diaper. Of course, plastic pants always must be worn over the cloth diaper.

Regarding disadvantages, cloth diapers are bulky to wear and can be difficult to conceal in street clothing. Using cloth diapers requires much laundering. There also is the problem of diaper pail odor when used diapers are stored. If you have raised children you know how much of a problem this can be.

After washing, heavy flannel diapers can require a very long time to dry. Birdseye and gauze materials are less dense and will dry faster.

DIAPERS AND BOWEL INCONTINENCE

For fecal incontinence you should buy taped diapers, not pullups. Please note that no pull-up style diaper is recommended for fecal incontinence or diarrhea as they just leak too often. I try to experiment with new diapers, both taped and pullups, under what I call practical “field conditions.” I thoroughly test the diapers I recommend and use them as intended when I am safely away from other people. For example, after a bowel “accident,” one of the more expensive premium brands of pullups not only leaked feces, but failed catastrophically (that’s why we wear taped diapers and plastic pants – more on that later). As almost all pullups are breathable, they will quickly transmit considerable fecal odor. A taped diaper, particularly a plastic-backed taped diaper, will provide you with more protection and transmit less odor. Despite the foregoing, there are a few fairly good pull-ups, if you must wear one.

Think plastic. You are better off buying diapers with a plastic shell (plastic-backed) – rather than diapers made with breathable, cloth-like backing. The so-called breathable cloth-like disposable diapers actually are a cloth-like coating over a layer of breathable plastic. The non-breathable plastic shell contains fecal odor while the breathable diapers transmit it. Breathable diapers are acceptable for someone with urinary incontinence, but much less so for those with fecal incontinence. However, you may prefer to wear breathable diapers at home, particularly in warm weather.

For fecal incontinence, the top priority is containment, containment, containment. Even a tiny leak can produce tremendous odor. Absorbency is a secondary concern. Look for very high internal leak guards (a.k.a. “gutter guards”) and elastic leg gathers that are both high and snug. The internal standing leak guards are the high strip of waterproof or water-resistant material that runs along both sides of the crotch inside the diaper from front to back. The leak guards in the new Wellness Signature Superio are a good example, but I will mention others.

Regarding absorbency, those who are FI, usually can get by with less total absorbency than those who are urinary incontinent. A minor difference is the type of absorbency we need. We need a fast rate of absorption for a smaller quantity of loose bowel or diarrhea, rather than a high total capacity of absorption.

The diaper absolutely must fit your personal anatomy. If you do not have a good fit for your shape, even the most expensive premium diaper will not perform well for you. You will have to try different brands and, within the brands, different diapers and sizes, to find the best fit. Men generally prefer diapers with a wider crotch that better envelopes the genitals to prevent leaks. Some women find diapers with a very wide crotch to be less comfortable.

If you have a messy (or “poopy,” if you prefer) diaper, fecal odor quickly will become evident to everyone around you. Odor can also affect those with urinary incontinence, but to a much lesser degree. It becomes evident more quickly and is stronger if you are wearing a breathable cloth-type diaper. Most people with fecal incontinence will recommend that you wear only plastic-backed diapers, even though they are warmer in hot weather.

A good quality diaper cover or so-called “plastic pants” is essential both to contain leaks and to help contain odor. With a quality diaper and good plastic pants, I have been able to walk for 1 3/4 miles with a very messy diaper without experiencing a leak (of course, I do not recommend it).

After a fecal accident, the biggest problem is when you are forced to sit down for any reason (such as to drive home or to remove clothing) before changing your diaper. That probably is the moment when you are at the greatest risk of a

serious leak as the fecal material will be forced outward against the leak guards and leg gathers. Most of the time good plastic pants will catch any leakage, but not always.

Sitting down also will vent air from inside the diaper along with fecal odor. The fecal odor level initially will increase, and then will decrease as the original smell dissipates. If you continue sitting, so long as you are still, there will be reduced odor, but more with a breathable diaper.

Walking long distances with a messy diaper will increase the chances of a leak. Even when there is not a massive leak, the continued flexing of the leg, leak guards, and leg gathers in prolonged walking can allow fecal matter very slowly to work its way out.

The waistline of your diaper should come up high in the back. If it is worn properly, you initially will think that it is coming up too high. It does increase the likelihood of the top of the diaper being seen if your shirt rides up over it in back, but there is a good reason for it. When you sit down after a bowel accident, fecal material moves under the pressure. In addition to moving toward both sides, it will move forward and, in males, may coat the bottom and sides of the scrotum and the head of the penis. Surprisingly, the path of least resistance often is the trough formed by the buttocks and up the base of the spine. When you sit down, particularly if you sit down quickly, you may find that soft fecal material surges up your back, almost to the waistline of your diaper!

Fecal odor will make itself evident despite all the above. You can reduce it but not totally eliminate it. It helps to plan your outings during what you consider to be your safer periods. During your riskier periods, have a bail-out plan, or “Plan B” for what you will do after a bowel accident.

If you have a bowl accident, it is important to try to change immediately, if possible. The digestive acids remaining in the fecal material can be extremely irritating to the skin, potentially leading to a serious rash.

Deodorizer sprays can markedly reduce or even eliminate fecal odor during a diaper change. There are small portable sizes of these sprays that can be carried in your diaper bag.

You may wish to wear latex or vinyl gloves during a diaper change. When away from home, latex gloves always are recommended when changing a messy diaper. If the diaper is messy, it is almost impossible to complete the change without getting fecal matter on the hands. If you have to change when on the go, you risk transferring feces from the hands to your clothing at the end of the change, before you have a chance to wash. Keep two latex gloves in your “go” kit. If a spouse or caregiver will be assisting you with a diaper change, they will want to wear latex gloves.

When removing a diaper messy with bowel at home, do not detach the tapes. In order to keep fecal matter from spilling out, try to carefully lower the still taped diaper over the hips and to the floor. To facilitate cleanup from any spillage I prefer to change a diaper while standing in a bathtub (having removed my trousers). Otherwise, an absorbent pad is recommended.

For diaper disposal, small 4- or 8-gallon trash bags or even supermarket grocery bags work well. In my experience, disposal bags intended for baby diapers are too small to put a messy quality adult diaper in. Attempting to force an adult diaper into a small disposal bag often results in a leak of fecal matter from the diaper! To contain odor, it is best to double-bag, or even triple-bag, a messy diaper.

LIMITED MOBILITY OR DEXTERITY AND DIAPERS

Diapers and wheelchairs

Due to the variety of physical and medical circumstances of wheel chair users, it is very difficult to generalize about their use of diapers. Some who use wheel chairs for mobility, but who are not totally incontinent, rely on diapers only at night if they cannot make it to the bathroom conveniently or on time. However, many who find diapers to difficult to manage from a wheel chair, or have frequent diaper rash, instead, use catheters.

In the choice of cloth versus disposables, one contributor notes that he prefers to use disposable diapers to avoid rashes as, with cloth, his skin feels wet all of the time unless he can change immediately.

While using a wheelchair, no one can tell that you have on a diaper so there should be fewer concerns about concealment. Comfortable and loose-fitting pants and shirts both hide diapers and help prevent pressure sores. Adaptive clothing is available to make a diaper change a little faster and easier.

Keep an entire day's supply of diapers (2 or 3) in a backpack that can be carried on the back of the wheelchair. Keep the diapers on the bottom of the pack and a change of clothes on the top to cover the diapers.

Wheelchair users should wear good quality diapers as urine and feces will spread immediately to the edge of the absorbent mat and time is required for the mat to wick the fluid into the SAP layer. If a premium quality diaper is not used, leakage immediately will be visible upon transferring to or from your chair!

Conduct frequent skin checks, especially when changing a messy diaper. If any skin redness is noted, one user prefers and recommends the barrier cream Calmoseptine. Camoseptine ointment contains 20% Zinc Oxide, menthol, and

an antiseptic. It is available OTC from local pharmacies.

Changing a diaper in a wheelchair requires practice for each person to find the best way. One contributor recommends the following:

To change a wet or soiled diaper, find a family restroom if possible, or, if not, a wheelchair accessible stall in a public restroom. Position your chair in a good position to transfer to the toilet. Pull your pants down to your ankles so you can separate your knees for easier cleanup. Leave the diaper on when transferring to the toilet. Once there, get as comfortable as possible, un-tape the diaper on both sides and push the sticky tabs back onto the original place they were stuck to when new. Clean up your front area as best as you can with wipes. If there was a bowel movement, put on disposable gloves then lean over toward the wheelchair so as to be completely off of the used diaper (be careful when leaning over - if you do not sit back far enough the diaper will slide forward and land on the floor and probably your feet.) With the arm you now have free, grab the front of the diaper and fold it carefully over the back. Dump any fecal matter into the toilet. Then place the folded diaper onto the floor. You then can clean up your bottom with wipes and gloves if needed. Once satisfied you are done, place a clean diaper on the wheelchair cushion. Then transfer onto the clean diaper and carefully tape it in place so the legs are snug but not tight, and the back of the diaper is at your waist. Then pull the gloves off so they turn inside out; put the gloves into the used diaper, and roll the front of the diaper into the back. Use the tapes that were placed back on the shipping tab to hold the diaper in the rolled shape. Discard the used diaper in the garbage can in the restroom. If it is soiled, first place it in a ziplock gallon size bag (kept in the backpack) and dispose of it in the bathroom trash.

Diapers and limited dexterity

if you have limited dexterity but still choose to use taped diapers, wearing taped diapers just a little bit small will cause you to have to twist uncomfortably (or impossibly) to each side in order to grab the tapes on the rear wings. A larger size diaper with just a few additional inches on each side can make a big difference.

Many who are able to stand have difficulty changing a diaper in a public restroom as they have limited balance which makes reaching behind to position the diaper against a wall difficult, and twisting to the sides to reach the tapes and then placing the tapes accurately difficult, if not impossible.

Even for those who prefer to wear taped diapers, the use of the sides of the toilet stalls in a workplace restroom may be blocked by toilet paper holders, hooks, etc., making pullups a more manageable option.

For those with limited dexterity, pullups may be the best option. Premium pullups, with a small booster, can offer a respective absorbent capacity. Plastic

pants are recommended over the pullup.

While most pullups are easy to remove, as the sides can be torn, they still require clothing to be removed to don new ones, particularly by men.

Cloth diapers are available with Velcro fasteners – much easier than using diaper pins for those with dexterity issues. Cloth diapers are available as pullups and as All-In-Ones, with a waterproof shell. These work well. The disadvantage is a long drying time.

For plastic pants, snap-on plastic pants may be easier to don than pullup plastic pants for many with physical limitations, especially those in wheelchairs.

BOOSTER PADS

Booster pads, also called “doublers” or “stuffers,” are absorbent pads that are added inside a diaper to increase the diaper’s overall total absorption. The pads may be rectangular in form or contoured in an hourglass shape to be more narrow in the crotch. The pads are placed inside the disposable diaper on top of the diaper’s own absorbent mat, between the leak guards. The booster pad usually sticks to the diaper’s mat by means of an adhesive. The booster pad is not waterproof so, once it has become saturated with urine, it passes additional liquid through to the diaper’s regular absorbent mat. Do note that booster pads are not the same as incontinence pads (which are inserted into the user’s own underwear).

Booster pads markedly increase the time between diaper changes and can save money by requiring fewer changes in a day. Some users change just the pads when they are saturated, extending the length of use of the diaper itself significantly. This works with pads that do not have an adhesive and is easier for those wearing pullup diapers.

For best efficiency, men should position a booster pad higher in the diaper than women.

Some doublers absorb a considerable amount of urine, as much as some diapers. Most booster pads come in sizes, rated for absorbency, such as 12 oz., 16 oz., and even 32 oz.! Booster pads cost much less than diapers and their use can markedly lower the price per ounce for incontinence protection. A booster pad can really improve the absorbency of a less expensive diaper. However, a better quality diaper may be a better and less expensive choice than using a less expensive diaper with a booster.

Be careful about using too large a booster pad for your diaper. Large boosters that fill the space between the standing leak guards increase the risk of fecal overflow and also urine for those who tend to flood. Boosters swollen high with

urine may cause feces to push over leak guards. Very large boosters can overlap the diaper's leg gathers, increasing the likelihood of a leak, particularly for bowel incontinence.

You can waste money on booster pads that are too large for your needs. Just as the rear portion of a diaper tends to be unused or under-used, the rear portion of long booster pads may not be effectively used. If your goal is to save money by reducing the number of diapers you use per day very large boosters may not be cost effective. It may be more economical and efficient just to use the next smaller size of booster. Smaller boosters are particularly efficient as they are placed where you need the absorption most and will become 100% saturated. They also cost less.

There are disadvantage in that higher capacity doublers will add markedly to the diaper's overall bulk, particularly in the crotch and in the seat. The bulk can become noticeable as the doubler/diaper combination swells with the absorbed urine. Also, the increased weight, and diaper sag, as both the doubler and the diaper near their absorbent capacity may require some form of additional support, such as adult "onesies" (bodysuits), compression pants, or diaper suspenders, discussed below. Some doublers, once saturated, may not feel "dry" next to the skin. Additionally, the increased bulk between the legs may cause chafing with the inner thighs. Wearing boxer-type shorts or compression pants over the diaper and diaper cover can help to reduce the friction. Lastly, for those who are bowel incontinent, the swollen bulk of a saturated booster pad takes up a lot of space in the diaper and in the event of a bowel accident can cause feces to leak over the leak guards and past the leg gathers.

Some boosters absorb urine as advertised but do not transfer it efficiently to the diaper. The result can be a wet clammy feeling.

COMMON DIAPER PROBLEMS

Common problems include pin-hole leaks (a manufacturing defect), tapes coming loose, punctures or tears in the outer shell, absorbent mat clumping, and the gel core spilling out (usually tiny beads) if torn.

ODOR

Urine initially has no bacteria and little odor. The diaper deodorant in most diapers will help counter urine odor for several hours - until the diaper is near saturation. This should be satisfactory for most users. Most new diaper users are overly concerned about urine odor. Urine odor may become more noticeable for those who wear high-absorption diapers for long periods of time – usually beyond six hours. For some users, beyond four hours urine odor may become slightly noticeable to those very nearby and may become more significant at some point beyond six hours. It helps to have a spouse, significant other, or

caregiver advise you regarding odor as others tend to detect our odors before we do.

Insufficient water intake will markedly increase the odor of the urine. Good hydration probably is the most important single factor in negating urine odor. Some foods, such as asparagus, increase urine odor. In contrast to urine odor, bowel odor will become evident very quickly, after about 30 seconds to a few minutes.

To counteract odor, place some diaper powder in the diaper as a deodorant. To counteract odor in a diaper pail, add some baking soda.

Cloth-like diapers and hybrid diapers will transmit more odor, and more quickly, than diapers with an all-plastic shell. Every layer you wear over the diaper, even underwear of breathable PUL “plastic pants,” will help to reduce the perceptible odor.

NEED FOR MULTIPLE TYPES OF DIAPERS

Most users require different types of diapers for specific needs. Often different diapers are worn for use at home, outside the home, and at night. For home use only, the least expensive diaper that is effective usually is worn (even if it is a lower quality drugstore diaper). For outside the home, usually the best, or most affordable, diaper suitable for discrete wear is worn. For nighttime, usually the heaviest and most absorbent diaper is worn. Overnight diapers often are too bulky to wear out of the home discretely.

WHAT DO I USE?

After much research and experimentation, I usually wear a combination of several diapers for normal daytime use: ConfiDry 24/7, Super Seni Quatro, and Tena Slip Maxi. For exercise I wear the thinner Unique Wellness Superio Signature or the Tena Slip Maxi that will not show under thin exercise clothing. For dress occasions I almost always use the Tena Slip Maxi that is an excellent performer and thin enough to be very discreet. For nighttime I usually wear a ConfiDry 24/7 with a booster, plus a cloth diaper on top to catch leaks.

Although I prefer to wear plastic-backed diapers, I have begun wearing a hybrid or totally breathable diaper daily as an aid in rash prevention (in order to provide more air circulation). If my preferred (but hard-to-find) European-made breathable Super Seni Quatro is not available I will wear an Abena Abri-form Premium Air-Plus L4 (also breathable).

As plastic-backed diapers are becoming more difficult to find, I am experimenting with breathable diapers and hybrids with a non-breathable cloth-like shell front

and back, but with breathable side and back panels. They are good diapers but stretch and sag more than I like.

During periods of urinary incontinence I have used XP Med's new cost-effective Absorbency Plus plastic-backed diapers in both Level 3 and Level 4. These are good and very cost-competitive diapers for urinary incontinence but lack the standing leak guards that are so desirable for bowel incontinence.

I also use a 10 to 18-ounce absorbency booster pads with the above diapers during periods of heavy urinary incontinence when I need to extend the time between diaper changes. With the use of booster pads I usually can get by on three diapers per day - four if I exercise or have a bowel accident.

TAPES COMING LOOSE?

Tapes often come loose when they snag on clothing or bedding. If you are having problems with the tapes coming loose, cover them or reinforce them. Diaper covers, or even a pair of underpants, help to keep the tapes from coming loose. I routinely reinforce the tapes of most of the diapers I wear, regardless of brand, unless they have a plastic front taping panel. That way I can insure that the diaper is taped snugly and will not come loose. Many use duct tape or the less industrial and more colorful Duck brand tape, but any tape that works can be used. However, I have not found it to be necessary to reinforce the tapes on diapers with a plastic front-panel "landing zone."

It is not uncommon for those who wear a premium diaper to near its absorbent capacity to experience tape failure because of the weight of the sagging diaper, especially for active people. Don't turn down an otherwise good diaper just because the tapes occasionally come loose. In my opinion that is a very minor problem as it is a simple thing to reinforce the tapes. The end result is that my tapes NEVER come loose and I do not have to worry about them.

LET 'EM HANG

After being compressed together in packaging and stored for months or even years in a warehouse, the absorbent mat of some diapers can feel almost as dense as cardboard and rough to the skin. It can help to take the diaper out of the package, open it up, and leave it out at least overnight. To some extent, the absorbent mat will expand and fluff out, making it more comfortable against the skin. It also will improve the rate of absorption. I hang mine in a closet, using clothespins.

SHAKE IT OUT

Before using a new diaper, open it up and shake it out to fluff up the absorbent mat and make it softer and more comfortable against your skin. If there still are

any stiff compressed portions of mat, massage them with your fingers to break up and soften the clumps. Then run your fingers along the length of the leak guards and leg gathers to ensure that they are free and erect. Fold the diaper lengthwise along the centerline to create a soft fold - you do not need a sharp crease. This will accomplish two things. It will provide a slightly deeper trough for urine and fecal containment that will keep urine and fecal matter lower with regard to the leak guards to reduce overflow. It also will narrow the width of the crotch area of the diaper between the inner thighs to reduce friction and subsequent irritation.

DIAPER COVERS

Often, diaper covers are referred to as “plastic pants” regardless of actual composition. All diaper covers will catch the wicking from breathable cloth-like shell diapers. Plastic pants are your last defense in the event of a leaking diaper of any type.

The main choices are “plastic” versus polyurethane laminate (PUL). Both will contain leaks. Regular old-fashioned non-breathable plastic has the better odor containment. The newer PUL pants are breathable. They can be noticeably cooler in warm weather, but have the disadvantage of transmitting more odor (usually only significant with bowel incontinence). PUL pants have the benefit of being easy to wash as they are not affected by soaps or detergents. The Garywear Active briefs are advertised as capable of being washed 50 to 100 times. In the plastic category, vinyl is my favorite as thick vinyl pants are soft, quiet, and do a great job of containing odor. Although initially less expensive, vinyl pants will last a much shorter time than PUL pants. Some thin plastics, especially urethane, can very loud, sometimes so loud as to discourage their wear in public.

Remember rubber pants? If you are older than a certain age, when you were in diapers, your mom may have had you wear rubber pants outside of your diaper. Adult rubber pants are still manufactured but are considered a specialty item and are difficult to find. Rubber pants also are heavier than plastic pants.

Plastic pants come in two types – the popular and common pullup and a version with snap-on sides. The regular pullup style offers slightly better leak containment and odor control. Particularly when worn at night while sleeping on your side while wearing a disposable diaper, the pullup style offers much greater leak containment than the snap-ons. In a snap-on, while on your side, urine can leak through the small gaps between the snaps. However, the snap-on offers the considerable convenience of being able to remove the diaper cover without first having to remove your trousers and shoes. This is a significant advantage when changing a diaper in a public restroom, particularly if you are bowel incontinent and must remove soiled the plastic pants.

Vinyl plastic pants are available in a wide variety of styles and shapes, ranging from a trim-fit bikini to bloomers. Bloomers are said to be particularly effective at preventing leaks at the legs. A “Senior Cut” vinyl pant is offered by Fetware for seniors whose legs may be thinner and who need a more snug fit around the legs to prevent leaks. Vinyl plastic pants are available in a choice of thicknesses. The thicker vinyl lasts longer and actually is the quieter. Plastic pants are available not only in clear or milky vinyl, but in a variety of colors, including blue, pink, yellow, and even purple!

Plastic pants to be worn over cloth diapers must be full-cut and significantly larger than those designed to fit over disposables. Some have very high backs to cover the higher back of cloth diapers. A cloth diaper wicks well and must be completely covered as the cloth will wick moisture to anything in contact with it.

Note that barrier creams and lotions, particularly if they are petroleum-based, can cause both PUL and vinyl pants to degrade. They cause my vinyl pants to discolor, become so brittle that they make crackling sounds, and then the material actually begins to crack. My PUL pants seem to survive this better. Lotions degrade the breathability in PUL pants but the pants still are waterproof. Creams and lotions have less affect on urethane (although urethane can be much louder). Water-based personal lubricants will not affect plastic pants.

For odor control you will need to select the combination of plastic pants and diaper that best suit your needs. For example, PUL pants over a breathable cloth-like shell, or hybrid, diaper offers the coolest combination for warm weather but will transmit more odor than vinyl pants over a plastic-shell diaper.

You will need several pairs of plastic pants, depending on the severity of your incontinence. It also helps to have several pairs to reduce the frequency of doing the laundry and time to dry if you hand-wash.

If, despite wearing a good quality disposable diaper, you have leaks that escape the plastic pants, some users find that wearing a pair of cotton underpants between the diaper and the plastic pants helps to absorb and contain small leaks. Wearing a pair of boxer shorts on top of the plastic pants can further help to catch small leaks. For larger leaks, particularly at night, some users wear a cloth diaper on top of the disposable.

Washing Vinyl Pants

Some authorities recommend that we only rinse and NOT WASH vinyl pants as detergents and soaps contain degreasers that will remove the plasticizers in the vinyl that keep them soft and pliable (it will not harm the plastic itself). If the pants are so soiled that they must be washed, hand wash them with only a mild soap. Vinyl pants should be hung to dry.

Washing Polyurethane Pants

Polyurethane pants are not affected by soaps or detergents, skin creams, lubricants, oils, bodily fluids, or lotions, but should be hand-washed and hung to dry. Polyurethane pants do not dry out or crack.

“STEALTH” DIAPERING (CONCEALMENT)

In discreet wearing of diapers, there is a three-fold concern – diaper noise, visual bulk or bulges, and waddle:

Noise – some diapers make so much noise (diaper rustle or crinkling) that they can be heard from 15-feet away and are not good for wearing outside the home. Consider the noisiness of the diaper’s plastic backing. Fortunately most plastic shells make less noise as they warm up.

Bulk/bulges – some diapers leave a noticeable outline of the diaper in our clothing (particularly in the rear). There may be vertical lines at the right and left sides of your rear where the absorbent mat ends.

Diaper “unibutt” occurs as the diaper covers the divided cheeks of your rear, causing your rear to appear more “flat” than normal. This is because they eliminate the natural depression along the crack between the buttocks. There is really nothing you can do about that.

Diaper sag can pull the diaper, heavy with absorbed urine downward, leaving a bulge in your trousers. Many highly absorbent diapers, even while dry, may cause the crotch and seat of your trousers to appear “too full.” This is more easily concealed by someone who is heavy-set than by someone who is slender. Some highly absorbent diapers, as they absorb urine and swell, may reach much as 2” in thickness and cause visible bulges in the crotch and lower pelvis. However, by this point you probably already will have become aware that you are beginning to waddle. A good choice of clothing can minimize these problems (see below). However, to put some perspective on this issue, remember that it is better to bulge than to leak!

“Waddle” – as some diapers near their absorbent capacity, their combined sag and bulk can encourage users to walk with a noticeable “waddle.” This can be countered by changing before the diaper bulk and sag becomes so extreme, and wearing compression shorts, adult “onesies,” or diaper suspenders, discussed below.

Choose Your Clothing –

*Trousers - wear trousers one to two sizes larger than normal. An alternative is to use a less bulky diaper. Always wear black trousers or jeans as the color hides leaks.

*Adult “onesies” – these bodysuits snap at the crotch, or just above, and prevent the problem of T-shirts riding up in back and showing the top of the diaper. They also significantly help to support the weight of the diaper and prevent diaper sag (when heavy with urine). To achieve the best lift for a sagging diaper, the fit from neck to crotch is important. Onesies are available as T-shirts and as men’s polo shirts or golf shirts. Most have the

snaps located in the crotch. Some locate the snaps higher up the front for easier access.

*“Silencers” - any diaper cover or underpants will help to quiet diaper noise. Ordinary cotton jockey-style underpants work. Men’s stretchable Spandex underpants additionally help to smooth out the shape (I use ExOfficio brand).

*Compression shorts and pants – short of wearing a onesie, these do the absolutely best job of holding the diaper in place, concealing the diaper, and preventing sag, all at one time. I wear Under Armour compression shorts and compression pants. Women may prefer to use pantyhose.

*Diaper covers (plastic pants/rubber pants) – if the plastic pants themselves are not noisy, they will help quiet the noise from the diaper. Additionally, any form of cover also helps prevent tapes from coming loose.

*The ultimate solution – wear a quiet plastic diaper, covered by quiet vinyl plastic pants, covered by Spandex shorts or compression pants, and finally covered by trousers or jeans. When I wear this combination, you cannot visually tell that I am wearing a diaper - or hear anything. Not even family can tell.

WHERE THE DIAPER HOLDS THE LIQUID

Different diapers may hold the absorbed urine in slightly different positions. This may affect how discreet the diaper is and how noticeable the diaper sag becomes to the wearer. Some diapers, particularly those with more fluff, make more use of the absorbent mat in the front of the diaper. This may produce a noticeable bulge in the front. Others, particularly those with more SAP, hold most of the absorbed urine in the lower crotch of the diaper. This should be less noticeable, but may cause the wearer to have more of a tendency to waddle.

DIAPER SAG

As a diaper absorbs more urine, its weight will increase and, particularly after multiple wettings, begin to sag to an annoying degree. Diaper sag is closely related to diaper “waddle.” As the volume of urine causes the diaper to swell, the increased bulk of the heavier diaper sagging between the legs can cause the wearer to walk with a waddle. A significant waddle may be noticeable to others. Several options help to provide some support for the weight of the diaper, keep it close to the body, and, to some degree, compensate for the increased bulk between the legs:

- Spandex underpants – effective if diaper is changed before the sag becomes too pronounced
- Compression shorts and pants – much more effective than underpants
- Onesies – adult onesies provide excellent support and help with concealment. Need to get the right size in torso length for the best

support. A negative factor is that wearing a onesie makes it difficult to self-check the diaper for wetness.

- Diaper suspenders – effective in supporting diaper weight but may complicate a diaper change, particularly in a public restroom. Metal suspender clips may be noticed during a scan by TSA at airport security.

What do I use? I choose from a combination of Spandex underpants, compression shorts, and onesies. When wearing a diaper for a brief period before a planned change I may just wear Spandex underpants over it. For dress occasions, or when wearing thin athletic attire, I use compression shorts for the added concealment they offer. For casual situations when concealment is not a major factor I prefer to wear onesies as I find them to be so comfortable.

FOR GUYS ONLY – DIAPERING “UP” OR “DOWN”

Most males will feel more comfortable positioning the penis pointing in the familiar “down” position in the diaper. This is what they are used to from wearing ordinary underwear. However, there are advantages to diapering with the penis in the “up” position. It makes more efficient use of the front portion of the diaper that otherwise usually does not become completely soaked with urine, thus slightly extending the time until the next change.

More importantly, for those who are bowel incontinent or double incontinent (both bowel and bladder), diapering with the penis in the “up” position keeps the tip of the penis, with the urethral opening, further away from contact with feces, thus reducing the risk of acquiring a UTI from bacteria in the feces.

For those who are only bowel incontinent and pee in the toilet, diapering “up” makes it easier to pull the penis upward in order to pee over the top of the diaper.

Many wearers are concerned that diapering “up” may cause leakage of urine over the top of the diaper. This should not be a problem if the diaper is taped correctly and, particularly, if plastic pants also are worn.

FOR GALS ONLY

Due to female anatomy, women are more likely than men to develop UTI's. As a woman's urethra is closer to the genitals and anus, and, as a woman's shorter urethra reduces the distance that bacteria must travel to reach the bladder, it is easier for bacteria to reach her bladder than in men. Women who are post-menopausal or use some forms of birth control also are more predisposed to have UTIs. Accordingly, this emphasizes the importance for women to clean thoroughly after a bowel accident – even more so than it is for men.

A woman's choice of an incontinent product for wear in public, particularly in the workplace, whether a pullup or taped diaper, is complicated by certain social, architectural, physical, behavioral, and other considerations. Even without

incontinence, a woman using a public restroom generally takes longer than a man. In the workplace during a 10-minute break from a meeting, there may be a line of women waiting for the same stall. A lengthy time in the stall to change a taped diaper may be perceived as unreasonable and even receive comment. A pullup can be pulled down relatively quickly and safely vice the slower process of undoing a taped diaper and risking dropping it or spilling its contents. Most pullups can be torn at the sides for removal. Incontinence pads also can be changed relatively quickly, whereas changing a taped diaper requires more time.

Diapers and “that time of the month”

During their periods, incontinent women have several options including 1) just using the diaper, 2) placing a menstrual pad inside the diaper, 3) using tampons, or 4) using a menstrual cup.

Many women who wear diapers 24/7 just use the diaper during their periods. Some women who are not incontinent prefer to use a pullup diaper during their times of heavy flow. A plastic shell diaper or pullup is recommended to contain leaks and odor, and to prevent wicking. The menstrual blood, mixed with urine will have a pinkish color that can be seen through the plastic shell. Some women have noted that menstrual blood in diaper, mixed with pee, will make contact with all of the skin touching the diaper and this will mean more cleanup. One woman has told me that she dislikes the distinctive “peach mat” lining of the Tranquility products as it makes it difficult to estimate the amount of blood vice urine, etc.

Some women place ordinary menstrual pads in their diapers. However, menstrual pads generally are larger and thicker than most booster pads. Some women object to the excessive bulk between the legs. For women who wear cloth diapers, there also are cloth menstrual pads.

During menstruation, some women prefer to use a tampon with the diaper, as the diaper was not designed to absorb fluid of the consistency of menstrual blood. If tampons are used, there should be little impact on diaper changing times as tampons usually are changed more frequently than high absorbency diapers. Medical authorities recommend changing tampons between four and eight hours. Tampons may increase the risk of toxic shock if left in for excessive periods.

Other women use menstrual cups. Some manufacturers recommend that menstrual cups be emptied every 4 – 8 hours, and at least every 10 - 12 hours. Diapers will need to be changed before that time is reached.

RASHES

Rashes are a serious concern as, in addition to the discomfort, they can become infected. Prevention is key. The likelihood of a rash is exacerbated if there is

insufficient water intake as that will cause a higher percentage of uric acid in the urine.

Diapers with breathable cloth-like shells offer increased ventilation that may reduce the likelihood of diaper rashes. Even hybrid diapers, with only breathable sides, may be all that is needed for rash prevention. Of course, you also can just skip the diaper for half an hour and sit on an absorbent pad while you “air out.”

For someone with sensitive skin, extended wear of a wet diaper can lead to skin irritation and diaper rash. Good hygiene and barrier creams are essential. If you are one of these persons, don't waste money buying an ultra-absorbent diaper when you will need to change before the diaper reaches its capacity.

The digestive acids and enzymes left in fecal matter can be extremely irritating to your skin. If you experience a bowel accident, it will be necessary to change your diaper as soon as possible, preferably immediately.

To prevent urine or fecal matter from being in direct contact with your skin, it is necessary to use a barrier cream. A barrier cream is essential to protect the skin from the uric acid in the urine or digestive acids left in fecal matter. Also, a barrier cream, even if only Vaseline, makes cleanup easier after a bowel accident. Barriers commonly used include Vaseline and adult diaper rash cream such as Balmex, and Desitin. The primary ingredient in diaper rash creams is zinc oxide. The percent of zinc oxide varies from around 11% to a maximum of 40%. The lower percentages should be fine for bladder incontinence. For those who need protection for longer periods or who are bowel incontinent, the 40% zinc oxide creams provide a more effective and longer-lasting barrier against digestive acids in feces. A thick barrier can last through multiple changes, unless you have a bowel accident. Lotions also may be used. Lotions are better than nothing but provide less protection and for less time between changes or bowel accident. I also have used generous quantities of plain old Vaseline, or its generics, because it is so inexpensive.

Liberal coat your bottom and cheeks with barrier cream, and also up the crack of your rear. A male also should coat the particularly sensitive skin of the scrotum and the lower portion of the penis – any part of the body that will come in contact with the wet or soiled part of the diaper. Unfortunately, 40% zinc oxide will leave you looking as if someone had whitewashed your genitals and backside

I routinely use a cream with zinc oxide such Balmex, Desitin, or Equate Diaper Rash relief. I prefer the Equate Diaper Rash Relief with 40% zinc oxide. If any early irritation does not quickly clear up, despite the use of a zinc oxide cream, I change to a stronger, more medicated cream. For serious rashes, Triple Paste is highly effective (although costly). I do not wait for this irritation to become a full-

blown rash. If that is not effective, see your doctor immediately. My dermatologist approved the use and sequence of Vaseline, zinc oxide cream, and Triple Paste, but I found that just using a 40% zinc oxide barrier effectively prevents any rashes, even when wearing premium diapers for long periods (up to 8 hours).

Powder, usually ordinary baby powder, often is used in lieu of, or in areas not covered by, a barrier cream or lotion. It both keeps you dry and reduces odor. I sometimes use baby powder with a breathable diaper for rash prevention when I am at home during periods in which I am unlikely to experience a bowel accident.

If you are FI only and are going to change immediately after a bowel accident, lotions or powders should be o.k. for skin care as your skin will not be exposed to the acids in feces for a lengthy period.

For cleanup at home, it is presumed that you shower or bathe once a day. For other diaper changes it still is important to wash. You can use a hand-held shower to rinse just your bottom, if you have the time. More frequently, it may be convenient to wash with a soft washcloth and warm water. The hand-held shower is particularly helpful when cleaning up after a messy diaper. Try not using soap as it may be too drying and cause more skin irritation. If you use soap, choose a mild one.

For cleanup on the go, use moist cleansing adult wipes. Adult wipes are much better than toilet paper or paper towels. While cleaning a messy diaper, toilet paper will stick to your hands, your bottom, and to the feces. In addition to having enough wipes for your bottom, include wipes for your hands. Adult wipes are much larger than baby wipes - my adult wipes are 13" on a side, large enough that I can fold them and use both sides. Wipes made specifically for adult incontinence work best as they often include chemicals to neutralize acids from urine or feces. I may use 1 to 2 wipes for a bladder accident, and 3 to 9 for a bowel accident. Baby wipes are just too small.

Sometimes changing with a proper cleanup, or only with wipes, just is not practical. In such circumstances I do a "field change" or "wet change" by just swapping the old wet diaper for a dry one, without any cleanup. However, I try to avoid doing this two diapers in a row. If I have to skip a cleanup, I always try to do a thorough cleanup at the next diaper change. As I am well hydrated, there will be very little odor. Unless you have very sensitive skin, this may work for you.

CHAFFING

If you have problems with chaffing, there are several things you can do. First, fold the diaper lengthwise to narrow it at the crotch. Wear a smooth cover on top of the diaper and plastic pants to reduce any friction. I like to wear compression

pants (like bike shorts) or Spandex underwear. You can experiment with Vaseline, lotions, or powders to reduce friction, but again note that they will cause most vinyl or PUL pants to degrade. Finally, if your chaffing occurs with exercise, be sure to begin the exercise with a completely dry diaper. You may need to limit your exercise period to one wetting to avoid friction between your thighs and the increasingly swollen diaper. If you go to a gym, you should be able to get 1 ½ hours of solid exercise in before you need to quit.

INTERNAL DEODORANTS

If you are concerned about personal odor, particularly in a close social situation, an option is to use an internal deodorant. These are FDA-approved tablets of either bismuth subgallate (such as Devrom brand) or chlorophyllin-copper (such as Nullo brand). They will reduce body and urine odor. They will not completely eliminate fecal odor, but they will markedly reduce it. If one product does not work for you, try the other. Results vary markedly because of differences in personal body chemistry, diet, and dosage. One negative factor is that most cause some degree of constipation.

STEALTH “DIAPER BAG”

The last thing an incontinent guy wants to be seen with is an obvious diaper bag. Most men will choose to use a backpack, messenger bag, briefcase, computer bag, or gym bag. Women may prefer to carry a larger purse. In addition to a clean diaper, the kit should contain wipes, barrier cream, latex gloves (for cleaning up bowel accidents) and disposal bags. Many use plastic bags from grocery stores for diaper disposal. The grey and semi-opaque ones are preferred.

“DISASTER” KIT

In addition to the stealth bag, it is advisable to keep a “disaster” kit in the trunk of your car. In addition to extra diapers, wipes, creams, and disposal bags, the larger disaster kit should contain an absorbent pad to protect the car seat and a complete change of trousers, shirt, and socks.

GOOD BRANDS

Good diaper brands to begin with are Tena, Molicare, Confidry, Wellness, Abena, and Tranquility.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED DIAPERS

(Although I prefer diapers with an all-plastic shell, I have included all-breathable diaper and hybrid diapers in the selection below. I only recommend diapers that I personally have used.)

Tena Slip Maxi – this is a plastic-backed European diaper, not manufactured in the U.S. It may be thought of as a Wellness Superio Signature diaper on steroids. Although a relatively thin diaper, it has a maximum absorbent capacity of 140 ounces or slightly over 4 quarts of urine! The diaper has a front plastic taping panel, strong tapes, and effective leak guards. Particularly good for social occasions in dress clothing. Case of 72 size Large for \$123 at XPMed (\$1.70 ea). Highly recommended. Order directly from XPMed. [Note: included for reference as the plastic-backed version has been discontinued.]

ConfiDry 24/7 – this heavy-duty diaper has strong but soft white plastic backing. Wide and strong reusable tapes. Waist elastics both front and rear. Very high standing leak guards. No wetness indicator. A wide crotch. Unusually roomy “drop” space for fecal containment. Maximum absorbent capacity is 90+ ounces. Sizing is a little larger than most diapers. Good odor containment. Plastic is a little noisy but acceptably so. May be too bulky for wear with dress clothing. Case of 72 in size Large for introductory price of \$99.95 at XPMed (\$1.39 ea.). Highly recommended.

Molicare Super Plus – a heavier, high absorbency, diaper with a purple all-plastic shell and good absorbent mat in the wings. Diaper mat has good wicking ability. Can be worn during the day for heavy incontinence and very good for overnight. This diaper has soft and quiet plastic. Size Large holds 46 oz. Case of 56 size L for \$75.19 (\$1.34 ea.). Recommended. Order from JDCSupplies.

Molicare Comfort Super – a medium absorbency diaper, good for day use. This diaper is a hybrid with a white plastic center but breathable side panels. 44 oz. rated capacity. Case of 90 for \$105.95 (\$1.18 ea.). Order from XP Medical – XPMed.

Abena Abriform Premium Air Plus – this diaper has a cloth-like breathable shell with refastenable Velcro tapes. Standing leak guards. Wetness indicator. Elastic waistband. Very quiet. Level 3 in size Large holds 115 ounces. In Level 4 and size Large it has a maximum absorbency of 135 ounces of liquid. Very good fecal containment. Case of 80 size L4 for \$99.95 (\$1.25 ea). Order from XP Medical – XPMed.

Wellness Superio Signature – this is an excellent new diaper with a white all-plastic shell. It has unusually high leak guards and leg gathers. Excellent fecal containment. It has a front plastic landing zone for tapes. Mat is very absorbent, despite its thinness. Additionally, the rate of absorption is very fast. I tested this diaper with a working capacity of at least 44 oz. (1.3 quarts) of fluid (water) while actually wearing it. Maximum absorbency is much higher. This diaper is surprisingly thin - to be preferred for wearing to work, wearing with dress clothing, or when in thin athletic attire. For women, the thinness may permit more options in clothing. A case of 54 is \$80 (\$1.48 ea.) direct, before coupon. With the frequently available 10% coupon the price per diaper is \$1.33. Recommended. Order direct from the Unique Wellness Company.

Tranquility ATN (All Through the Night) – this is a moderate thickness diaper intended for heavy incontinence and nighttime use. It has a plastic shell with absorbent mat that extends down the rear and into the wings more so than some other diapers. The diaper has internal leak guards. The diaper is very

comfortable as the mat is very soft and fluffy. The plastic is somewhat noisy, perhaps more noisy than some people will want to wear while outside the home. The ATN has good fecal containment and odor control. Absorbs 33 oz. A case of 96 is \$89 (\$.96 ea.). This may be the one of the best values available in a plastic-backed diaper. Order from Magic Medical.

Tranquility Slimline Fitted Briefs – this is a relatively thin diaper that is unusual in that it is available with either a plastic or an all-cloth-like breathable shell. It has good leak guards and leg gathers and is effective for bowel incontinence. It is very comfortable and very concealable. I wore this diaper with a breathable shell while on the Amazon River in Brazil in extreme heat and humidity when a plastic shell would have been excessively hot. Absorbs 21 oz. Case of 96 for \$83.00 (\$.86 ea.) (size L) from Magic Medical.

Absorbency Plus – this is a new generic plastic-backed diaper designed by, and made for, XP Medical (XPMed) whose owner is, himself, incontinent. The diaper does not have leak guards, but does have a very absorbent mat that extends significantly into the side and wings to reduce leaks and very good leg gathers. This diaper should be very good for urinary incontinence and satisfactory for bowel incontinence, particularly when worn around the home. Level 3 is rated for 64 ounces. Level 4 is rated for 86 ounces. Case of 64 L3 is \$75 (\$1.17 ea.), case of 64 L4 is \$89.95 (\$1.40 ea.), both a very good value. Order directly from XPMed.

Super Seni Quatro – European diaper. Breathable diaper with cloth-like shell but an air-permeable and waterproof barrier inside. Does not stretch and sag as much as other breathable diapers. Elastic waist both front and back. Wetness indicator both front and back. Internal standing leak guards. Excellent wicking – uses most of the diaper. Maximum absorbency – an incredible 4 liters (128 oz.). Holds most urine between legs, rather than in front. Good tapes. Good fecal drop zone. Very quiet. Mat does not clump. Best breathable diaper I have tested. Case of 60 (Large) is \$103 (\$1.71 ea.). Highly recommended, but available in the U.S. only from XP Medical.

Tranquility Premium Overnight (pullup) - While I generally do not recommend pullup diapers, and particularly for bowel incontinence, the best pullup I have found so far, including fecal, is the Tranquility Premium Overnight. In addition to its higher absorbency, it does have effective standing leak guards and good leg gathers. Although labeled “overnight,” this diaper would serve as a daytime diaper. Holds 34 oz. Recommended. Case of 64 for \$62.00 (\$.97 ea).

There are many well-reviewed brands of diapers, which I have not tested. These include Attends Extended Wear, and TotalDry C-Plus (formerly Secure-X Plus). Don't hesitate to experiment. Remember, if one diaper works for you, don't change! (pun intended)

OTHER ULTRA-HIGH ABSORBENCY DIAPERS

Some highly absorbent disposable diapers are available that seem particularly suitable for night time use. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge neither of the diapers below is available in the U.S. via regular distributors, so I have not

had the opportunity to test these, except for the Super Seni Quatro.

Rearz Inspire diaper - 4.5 to 5.0 L maximum capacity. Made in Canada for Rearz. Available in Canada for \$2.81 (Canadian) each when bought by the case. Shipped by the case to the U.S. for \$2.63 each.

Comficare L10 – size large holds a maximum of 5 L. Made in Germany. Available in Canada from Rearz. Bought by the case, \$2.66 (Canadian) each. Shipped by case to U.S. for \$2.63 each.

- Bambino Bellissimo - a thick and very high absorption plastic-backed diaper. Aimed at the AB/DL market, it will have babyish prints on the taping panel but who else is going to see it? Absorbency said to be 3.5 - 4.0 Liters. Noisy plastic. Standing leak guards. Difficult to reattach tapes. For best performance tapes need to be reinforced. Very wide crotch. Best for night use. Expensive. GET Price

BUYING DIAPERS

For most people, drugstore diapers usually are inadequate for all but very light incontinence. For better prices and more variety, order online from a medical supply house or adult diaper specialty retailer.

Diapers soon become expensive as the cost adds up over time. Unfortunately, you get what you pay for, so avoid cheaply made, inexpensive diapers. Some inexpensive drugstore diapers are not poorly made, but have very low absorbent capacities which easily are exceeded.

To save money, one thing you absolutely must do is purchase your diapers online by the case. There is a very serious savings in purchasing by the case that can reduce the price of individual diapers by as much as a third! Normally, there is no shipping charge for diapers purchased by the case. Some companies and vendors make discount coupons available. Don't hesitate to call and ask for help.

Not all companies size their diapers the same and there may be variations from one diaper line to the next, and even within the same brand. If possible, I strongly recommend that you first order samples to be sure that they fit you well. The samples usually are costly on a per-diaper basis but will save you from expensive mistakes. Otherwise, order just a package (usually 14-18 diapers). Amazon Prime is a good way to save on shipping charges when ordering less than a case.

RECOMMENDED VENDORS

- XP Medical - XPMed is my main and preferred vendor. I have had nothing but good experiences with them and recommend them highly. Gary Evans, the owner, is himself incontinent and is very helpful and honest.
- NorthShore Care Supply – good general-purpose supplier. Good variety but often more expensive than the other vendors in this list. Adam, the owner, has displayed serious interest in better serving the incontinent community.
- Magic Medical – especially good for Tranquility products.
- Amazon – particularly if Amazon Prime is used. Excellent for individual packages of diapers and smaller purchases as it avoids shipping charges. Good for wipes, barrier creams, etc. Diapers are shipped in unmarked boxes.

Disclaimer – I have no relationship with any diaper company or diaper vendor except as a user of their products and have received nothing in return for my recommendations.

COST

Diapers are not cheap – in fact, they become quite costly. However, do note that the more expensive quality diapers, if chosen wisely, usually will prove to be cheaper. This is because fewer diapers will be required per day, particularly if you have severe urinary incontinence. Consider the cost of 4 to 5 good quality diapers plus one extra-absorbent diaper for night as opposed to 8 to 12 cheap diapers. Drugstore diapers may turn out to be among the more expensive diapers. Usually, a less expensive diaper from a quality brand should give you better performance than a drugstore diaper.

Most good diapers cost between \$1.10 and \$1.75 per diaper, when ordered by the case. Some extra-absorbent diapers intended for night use can cost \$1.80 or more.

You will pay a much higher price per diaper for samples as the vendor has to open a case and repackage it, and particularly if shipping is included.

Nonetheless, it is worth it to avoid costly mistakes as you purchase in greater quantities.

BUYING DIAPER COVERS

A good vendor for diaper covers is Fetware (site caters to the AB/DL fetish but has the best selection of ordinary plastic pants). Fetware also operates DriWare, a site without the AB/DL fetish material and with a good, but more limited, selection of mainstream diaper covers. Amazon has a great selection, but is best if you have Amazon Prime.

HOW TO PUT ON A DIAPER (self-diapering)

You can exercise more control if you can put on your own diaper. Self-diapering preserves privacy and dignity and you get the fit you prefer.

Before you begin, wash your hands to remove any powder or lotions on your fingers as they can cause the tapes to become unstuck.

First shake out the diaper and ensure that the leak guards and leg gathers are free and erect.

Fold the diaper lengthwise along the centerline. A soft fold is desired, not a hard crease.

Standing is the preferred and recommended position for putting on a diaper.

Lean against a wall or door, slightly squatting, with your buttocks holding the rear top of the diaper in place against the wall or door behind you. Bring the front of the diaper up between your legs. The top of the absorbent mat inside the front of the diaper should come up to, or just below, your navel (the plastic will come even higher). Tape the bottom tapes first, then the top. Attach the lower two tapes first, angled about 20 - 45 degrees upward. Then the top tapes, angled 20 - 45 degrees down. Fold any extra plastic inside the waistline. Practice in front of a mirror.

In bed – takes practice. Diapering in this position is more difficult than standing.

Sitting – possible, but it may be difficult to get the tapes tight.

Note - a diaper with a snug fit has more absorbent matting in contact with the skin – a desirable trait for urinary incontinence. This improves the efficiency of absorption. Do not over-tighten the tapes. If you are bowel incontinent, a too-tight diaper eliminates much of the sag at the bottom that would provide space to contain feces.

Note #2 – another reason for not over-tightening the diaper's tapes, particularly the lower tapes. We want the diaper to be snug around the legs, but, as the diaper swells with the absorbed urine, the backing must be able to stretch and allow more room inside the diaper for the now much larger volume of fluff and SAP gel. This problem is greater with high-absorbency thin diapers containing less fluff and a lot of SAP (high-quality premium diapers). That high ratio of SAP causes the diaper to swell significantly compared to its original thickness.

Remember, even though the outer shell may not split, the liner on the inside of the diaper can split and release thousands of swollen SAP gel crystals, a real mess to clean up.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Particularly with a messy (poopy) diaper, you should practice changing at home so that you do not soil your outer clothing when changing in a public restroom (ugh!). When you have a messy diaper, first try to change it while standing in the bathtub to make cleanup easier while you learn how to handle the situation.

When not wearing trousers or shoes, you usually will be able to pull the diaper down over your hips and lower it to the floor without spilling the contents.

Next, practice removing the messy diaper - without first removing your trousers and shoes. Do this while sitting on the toilet as you might in a public restroom. The side panels of many diapers can be torn by hand. However, to avoid spilling fecal matter on their clothing, some users carry a small knife or pair of scissors for cutting the sides of the diaper.

ABSORBENT PADS (Chux)

Absorbent pads are necessary when changing a leaking or messy diaper in bed or on a floor. Absorbent pads also are a must to protect your car seat from a leaking messy diaper.

Many people do not realize that their mattress covers usually do not provide adequate protection against a significant urine leak from a diaper. The urine may ruin an expensive mattress. It is helpful to place a large absorbent pad under the sheet and on top of the mattress cover. I use a large absorbent pad (30" x 36") capable of absorbing 40 ounces of liquid.

WEARING DIAPERS OUTSIDE THE HOME

New adult diaper users always are extremely anxious about wearing diapers outside the home for fear that everyone will be able to tell that they are wearing diapers. That absolutely is not true. People do not look, they do not recognize the indicators they may see, and people really do not care. If you use the tricks I have recommended, it won't matter, as no one will be able to tell, not even your family!

Do you put on a fresh diaper when leaving home for a substantial time or social occasion? Although I hate the expense of wasting the unused part of the diaper I am wearing, I change, as I find it just too risky to leave home, wearing a diaper that is half-saturated, and counting on being able to change before a leak.

WHEN TO CHANGE?

When to change a diaper is a personal decision based on several considerations. First, of course, is the type of incontinence - a messy (poopy) diaper must be changed immediately. A wet diaper will be changed based on some or all of the following:

- Diaper's absorbent capacity – each diaper has a point of failure beyond which leaking is unavoidable.
- Diaper sag – after some volume of urine, the diaper will begin to sag uncomfortably from the weight of the urine.
- Waddle – as the diaper swells with urine, the crotch of the diaper will become so bulky that you cannot help but notice it. Then it becomes

increasingly difficult to walk without a waddle. Such a situation is uncomfortable, may lead to chafing with the inner thighs, and slowly may become evident to others.

- Odor – based on factors discussed elsewhere in this paper, urine odor slowly will become noticeable, mostly for those wearing for more than one wetting. However, other factors usually dictate a diaper change before odor becomes a major consideration.
- Skin protection – those with sensitive skin may find it necessary for personal hygiene to change a diaper before it has reached its absorbent capacity.
- Concealment - as the diaper swells with urine, it may bulge out more in front and in the rear (Exactly where depends on the design of the diaper). If in public, a diaper change may be dictated by the increasing difficulty of concealing the diaper.
- Sensitive skin – if you are prone to skin rash, your skin’s sensitivity may dictate the length of time between changes, rather than the diaper’s absorbent capacity.
- Economics – the longer a diaper can be worn without leaks, the more economical it becomes.

HOW CLOSE ARE YOU TO A LEAK?

Of course, each diaper is slightly different, with those diapers containing a lot of fluff feeling firmer while those containing a lot of SAP tend to feel softer. When we are alone, or at least have some privacy, the easiest thing is to reach down and feel the outside of the diaper. Here is my guideline for when I change a ConfiDry 24/7 or an Abena Abri-form Premium Air Plus in Level 3 (very absorbent diapers), based on a diaper’s absorbent capacity, by feeling the crotch:

- Diaper is firm – diaper is not near its maximum capacity
- Diaper is very soft – diaper has used much/most of its capacity
- Diaper is slightly “squishy” – diaper is nearly at capacity. Plan to change
- **Diaper is “squishy” – diaper is at capacity. Time to change**
- Diaper is very soft and watery — leak is imminent. Change immediately

When diaper squeezing is not practical, you still can judge reasonably accurately by a combination of the elapsed time since the last change and the sag and waddle factors. When a leak is near, I also first feel wetness at the leg gathers. Then my bottom begins to feel wet - immediately before the leak begins.

DAYTIME DIAPER CARRY

Which diaper do you carry with you for changes during the day at work, school, or shopping? Many seem to select a thinner diaper to carry in a backpack or purse. As I use a small backpack (daypack), my choice of diaper is determined more by my clothing and the type of activity I expect. If I am able to leave my backpack nearby in my car, I often will include both a heavy-duty diaper such as

the ConfiDry 24/7 and a thinner diaper such as the Tena Slip Maxi. I can fit three thick diapers plus wipes, disposal bags, etc in the back section of my daypack, leaving the other sections for other uses. If I had to, I could fit five diapers in my daypack.

CHANGING AWAY FROM HOME

This is when you will be glad that you have made a “Go Kit” of essential items needed for a change and have it with you. It can be very helpful to have a small hook to hang backpack from toilet stall wall. This will both keep it off the floor and importantly, within convenient reach. It also helps to have a small square of plastic to set things on as the floors of public toilets are notoriously unclean. A small pair of scissors or a pocket knife will help you more quietly remove the used diaper (particularly if you have reinforced the tapes). The only truly embarrassing moment may be when you exit the stall and place the disposal bag in the trash. Fortunately, while that may attract attention, very few people will recognize what it is. You may choose to put the used diaper in your diaper bag and dispose of it later.

Noise - Changing a disposable diaper can be a noisy process. If I must change a diaper in a public restroom, it sounds twice as loud to me as normal. Men may be more concerned about this as women have trash bins in their stalls and make some noise when using feminine hygiene products or changing baby diapers. Crinkling, rustling, and tearing sounds are not normal from a men’s room toilet stall. Flush the toilet repeatedly to cover most of the noise made while removing the diaper, opening up the plastic disposal bag, and preparing the new diaper.

LEAKS AND CLEANING UP.

Just changed and detected a few small drops of pee on your plastic pants? If so, just wiping it off with a paper towel or a wipe may be enough for now. If a greater amount of pee, just rinsing the plastic pants thoroughly in hot water may be enough. If there is a significant amount of pee, or it has been on the pants for a while, hand washing in mild soap and water is the best solution. However, if I am lazy I will wipe them off or dry them and put them in the washer. If there is even the slightest trace of feces, the pants must get a thorough hand or machine wash.

BOWEL ACCIDENTS WHILE AWAY FROM HOME

In the event of a bowel accident when out of the home, plan in advance whether you will try to change the diaper in a public restroom or return to your car and drive home. When they are available, family or disabled restrooms are best, as they provide some privacy. Know where the restrooms are, particularly the family or disabled restrooms.

In the event of an accident, first complete the fecal void! Do this in the diaper. That is, do not rush to a toilet and immediately pull the diaper off before fully completing the bowel movement. In the middle of changing, you do not want one final bowel spasm to leave fecal matter over your only unused diaper, your plastic pants, and your outer clothing.

If you sense an unavoidable fecal accident about to happen, move to a nearby area away from people. You may make some sounds while defecating into your diaper. To cover up any body movements, it can be helpful to fake a somewhat animated cellphone call. Other tricks include taking pictures, adjusting a cane, etc. Taking pictures of a low object with your smartphone can help by providing you with a reason for bending over or stooping.

SHAVING “DOWN THERE”

While not, strictly speaking, a diaper issue, shaving one’s pubic hair helps anyone who is incontinent and wearing a diaper to achieve three objectives. Pubic hair makes it more difficult to apply a barrier cream, particularly for males, greatly complicates cleanup after either urination or a bowel accident and often retains odor even after a cleanup, particularly when away from home and having to use wipes. Shaving the pubic hair markedly reduces all of these problems. The pubic hair does not need to be shaved completely bare (as I do) to see an improvement, but needs to be cut to a very short length. Shaving particularly is recommended for those who are bowel incontinent as feces often become intermeshed with the pubic hair, causing a very difficult cleanup. Shaving the pubic area can be difficult, particularly for males. It is important to avoid irritation and nicks which could lead to a rash or infection. A hand-held mirror and a body shaver help accomplish this. I have found the Norelco Bodygroom Pro electric body shaver used with a lubricating shaving gel (no alcohol please) to be very good for this purpose.

TRAVEL IN DIAPERS

General travel.

Unless you wear drugstore diapers, you cannot count on finding a premium diaper, particularly in your size, locally. Plan ahead and take enough diapers with you. For extended vacation travel, some travelers ship diapers ahead to local post offices for “General Delivery” pickup, to a hotel, or to a local Fedex store for pickup.

Road Trips

Car travel frees you of many of the worries of travel in diapers by air or sea, including TSA scans. However, it still is necessary to plan ahead. Even when driving around your hometown you should have an emergency diaper change kit with a change of clothes in your trunk.

For road trips, it is a pleasure to have the space in the car for all those diapers you will need. However, in the event of a delay, you should have diapers for an extra 24 hours – just in case. If you normally wear cloth diapers, consider wearing disposables just for the travel time as they are so much easier to manage as well as less bulky. Don't forget plastic disposal bags.

If you will be staying in one location for an extended period, consider having your diaper supplier mail a bag or case to that location instead of to your home. This is a particularly good choice if they offer free delivery!

You may wish to include small garbage bags to contain the smaller disposal bags, prevent odor, and have more privacy if you need to dispose of them yourself.

For extended road trips when it is impractical to carry enough diapers with you, five good options for diaper resupply include:

1. mailing diapers ahead to the local U.S. Post Office addressed to General Delivery, your name, and your approximate arrival date.
2. having your online supplier ship diapers to a local Fedex store for pickup. Be sure your supplier ships using Fedex.
3. mailing diapers to your future hotel. Check with the hotel desk before doing this.
4. Use the local WalMart. WalMart carries Molicare diapers, including Super Molicare. You can order online and pick the package up from the store closest to your destination, with no shipping charge.
5. Use a local medical supply house. Search online then call the store to confirm the availability of your preferred diaper, in your size or to have them order from their warehouse. You should be able either to place a hold on the diapers until your delivery, or purchase and then pick them up at the store.

The “gravitational phenomenon” (or “gravity effect,” if you prefer) – when you are sitting most of the time, and for extended periods of time, gravity will pull urine to your diaper's seat, which tends to fill up faster than the center area. This can increase the likelihood of leaks. For those who wear premium diapers for extended periods, the time may be reduced by this phenomenon.

Where to change when on travel away from your home area? Some suggested places to change with “clean bathrooms,” and which offer at least some level of privacy include:

- 1) Starbucks
- 2) Costco/SamsClub
- 3) Lowes/Home Depot
- 4) Target/Walmart
- 5) Walgreens/CVS Pharmacies
- 6) Cracker Barrel restaurants
- 7) iHop Restaurants

Airports

In Airports, handicap toilets offer better privacy and are preferred for diaper changes – particularly if you have a messy diaper. Be considerate and don't use

them for longer than absolutely necessary. If you are fortunate enough to have access to an airlines club, very private toilet facilities will be available.

Diapers in checked luggage

Diapers in luggage are not a problem and will not cause your bags to be opened. However, lost luggage will present a special challenge.

Diapers in your carry-on

Always carry extra diapers in your carry-on bag – even for a one-hour flight. A booked 1-hour flight has been known to actually last 8 hours! If your luggage is lost, the diapers in your carry-on should last you until you reach your destination.

TSA security inspection

Do not act overly anxious. Acting overly anxious may be interpreted by the TSA officer as suspicious behavior and cause you to be flagged for a private inspection.

The bulk of the diaper you are wearing, and the plastic pants, are not important. However, many people change into a thin diaper before entering security. It is important to have a dry diaper before going through the scanner. Change before entering the security area if necessary. You may wish to wear just a very inexpensive diaper or pullup. Remember, after passing security you can change into whatever diaper arrangement you wish to wear for your flight.

You can opt for a physical pat-down in lieu of the scanner. I discussed this with a TSA agent who said that it is not a “big deal” to the TSA officials.

If you wear a onesie, be sure that it does not have metal snaps. Don't use diaper suspenders with metal clamps.

If you are wearing a cloth diaper, it is unclear whether the metal diaper pins will set off the scanner.

In your carry-on, have a small diaper change kit with the minimum essentials. Note the TSA size limits on lotions or creams - use travel sizes and note that these will have to be in a small transparent plastic Zip-Lock bag that you can place in a bin to be scanned.

TSA Disability Notification Card – TSA has a small card which you can print and on which you can list that you are wearing diapers and have diapers in your carry-on bag. You can hand this silently to the TSA officer. It does not guarantee that you will not be scanned. The TSA Disability Notification Card may be found at the following URL:

https://www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/disability_notification_cards.pdf

Knives are a no-no, regardless of size. As I usually reinforce the tapes on my diapers, I carry a small pair of blunt-nose scissors in my day pack carry-on bag to make it easier (and quieter) to change in a public restroom.

On the plane

Airplane toilets just are not designed for an adult diaper change, so avoid them if at all possible. If you have a short flight and can wait, do so. If you have to use

them, you will find them to be very cramped. Place the used diaper in a disposable bag, compress it as much as you can, and place it in the (very) small trash bin.

At Sea (Cruise Ships)

The security check at the ship is less rigorous than at an airport and should not be a cause for concern. Again, knives usually are prohibited, but small blunt scissors are permitted.

Please note that no cruise line offers adult diapers for sale aboard. Plan accordingly – and very carefully. Ship's infirmaries do not sell diapers – those they stock are of low quality. To fly with diapers to the U.S. departure port, I must pay the cost of an additional suitcase filled with diapers and booster pads!

Cruise ship travel offers some flexibility to those who wear diapers as it provides a safe base of operations from which you can leave on excursions and return, without the need for packing and unpacking. You can request a larger trashcan or small diaper pail for your cabin. The room steward or maid will empty the trash daily. You can request a protective pad for the bed. Store your stash of extra diapers in a suitcase under under the bed.

Public rest rooms on most cruise ships offer excellent privacy as the stall walls usually extend completely down to the floor. Public men's rooms usually will not have trash bins in the individual toilets, so you still may have to exit the toilet with your used and bagged diaper.

Cruise ship tour excursions can offer a challenge for the diaper wearer, particularly in a foreign port where you do not speak the language. The nature of the individual tour may make it either easy or impossible for a change of diaper. Look at the length of the tour and its specific itinerary to judge whether it is practical, from a diaper perspective, to take that tour. The best case is where lunch is scheduled at a good restaurant with public toilets. Wear a more absorbent diaper than you think you will need. Don't go "A Bridge To Far." You never, never, should slow down a public tour to change your diaper. If your means permit you to engage a personal tour operator you will have more flexibility. In many ports you can engage an English-speaking taxi driver for a driving tour, with stops as needed.

To return to the cruise ship from a tour excursion, you usually will have to ride a crowded shuttle bus or take a tender (small boat – usually a ship's lifeboat). Bear in mind that if you have a messy diaper, it will be impossible to conceal that fact while returning back to the ship, and once aboard, to your cabin.

Camping (car or trailer camping)

Privacy may be challenging (lacking) and camp bathroom facilities often are less

than desirable. Accordingly, you may have to change in your tent or camper. As indicated previously, disposal bags are a must.

Traveling with others

If you are sharing a multi-room unit with private bedrooms with others, you must decide whether to tell them about your diapers so that they will not be shocked when they notice something. You do not have to do so, but hiding diaper disposal and odor will be big challenges.

If sharing a room with someone, you should inform them ahead of time to save everyone much awkwardness. Because of odor and trash it would be impossible to hide the fact.

Order Diapers Online in UK & Europe

As in the U.S., retail stores in the UK normally do not carry a large stock of adult diapers. It is convenient and quick to order from reputable online local suppliers, listed below. Most can deliver either the next day or the second day. Most will deliver to hotels.

- SaveExpress GMBH – Ships throughout Europe and the UK - Abena, Tena, A+, Molicare, Comficare.
- Dorset Nursing Supplies <dorset-nursing.co.uk> - Next day delivery in UK - Tena, Abena, Molicare. Highly recommended.
- Incontinence Uk <incontinence.co.uk> - next or 2-day delivery in UK. Tena, Molicare
- Incontinencechoice.co - delivers within 36 hrs - next day delivery in UK, including Saturdays. Tena, Abena, and Molicare.
- Cuddlz Adult Nappy Store <Cuddlz.com> - AB/DL store but with plain white adult diapers. Next day delivery available.
- Age UK <ageukincontinence.co.uk> - Next day delivery, including Saturday. Abena, Tena, Attends.
- Home and Medical <Homeandmedical.co.uk> - Next day delivery in UK. Molicare, Abena, Tena
- Every Nappy <everynappy.co.uk> - Next day delivery in UK. Abena, Molicare.

Retail Stores for Diapers in UK

In the UK, your best bet for finding adult diapers in a retail store may be at the local chemist (pharmacy/drugstore). Boots usually is recommended. Don't forget that you are looking for "nappies."

- Boots (chemist/drugstore) - carries adult nappys, including Tena

Order Diapers Online in Canada

- B4NS - <www.b4ns.com>. Ships to Canadian and U.S. addresses from separate distribution points. No guaranteed delivery times listed. Dry 24/7, Tena, Abena, Molicare, Bianco, SecureX, NorthShore. Ships worldwide.
- Age Comfort - <agecomfort.com> Free shipping in Canada on orders

over \$50.00. Express Courier Delivery is available. RearZ - Inspiron, ConfiCare, Abena, Molicare, Tranquility, ConfiDry 24/7, Wellness.

- RearZ - <www.rearz.ca>. Ships internationally but no guaranteed delivery times listed. RearZ, ConfiCare, Inspire, Abena, ConfiDry 24/7.

Retail Stores for Diapers in Canada

In addition to the below listing, also check with medical supply and seniors stores.

- RearZ - <www.rearz.ca>. Warehouse in Ottawa, Ontario; retail store in Kitchener, Ontario, Waterloo, Ontario. RearZ, ConfiCare, Inspire, Abena, ConfiDry 24/7.

SWIM DIAPERS

Swim diapers, contrary to popular expectation, are not designed to hold urine. They are designed for those who are FI to contain feces. The more correct name is fecal containment system. The chlorination in public pools will negate any urine passed through.

There are several brands of swim diapers available, but perhaps the best rated (and the one I personally wear) is the SoSecure swim containment diaper (fecal containment diaper) intended to be worn under swimwear – The SOSecure attaches snugly via very strong Velcro in the wings. Although it is not advertised or intended to contain urine, it will contain a small amount effectively. I often get water inside the SOSecure swim diaper. When I do, as I am coming out of the pool I actually have to break the seal at the leg holes to let the excess water out. A problem could be that, with some pool water getting inside the diaper, along with some urine, a more substantial amount of liquid eventually will have to be released somewhere - a shower in the changing room would be my recommendation. Please note that, to work effectively, the SOSecure swim diaper must be worn fairly tight - somewhat more than snug. I have to lie on the bed, position the diaper, and fasten the Velcro wings. That can make putting the swim diaper on difficult for someone with reduced motor skills. However, when put on properly, NOTHING is getting out of this diaper until you let it.

There also are single-use disposable swim diapers. Two of the more popular ones are Swimsters and Swimmates.

Swimsters – disposable adult swim diapers. Designed to contain solids and not to absorb liquids. Designed not to come apart in the water. Can be worn under swimwear. This swim diaper looks somewhat like a pair of plastic pants.

Swimsters also markets a reusable swim diaper.

Tranquility Swimmates – look very much like a Tranquility disposable pullup.

Has inner leg cuff guards for bowel containment. Designed not to break apart in the pool.

MATTRESS PROTECTION

While not exactly a diaper issue *per se*, protecting the mattress from a leaking diaper is something we all must do. Please note that an ordinary mattress pad is not designed to contain a large amount of leaking urine – some will pass through to the mattress below. Two things can be done – place a waterproof vinyl mattress protector, usually zippered, over the mattress, and an absorbent mattress overlay on top. Alternatively, large waterproof and absorbent mattress pads are available, both disposable and reusable. For lesser leaks, another method is just to place disposable absorbent underpads below the sheets.

DIAPER STORAGE SPACE.

Most of us never seem to have enough space for diaper storage. If you buy by the case, a generous supply of premium diapers can occupy a surprising amount of space. A case of thick, highly absorbent diapers with a lot of fluff such as the ConfiDry 24/7 contains 3 packages of 18 diapers each (54 diapers) and will take up a fair amount of space. In contrast, a case of the excellent absorbing but much thinner Tena Slip Max will take up much less space per diaper. Thin drugstore diapers will require even less space. Do you store empty suitcases? Fill them with diapers and use them for storage. 1 ½ packages of ConfiDry 24/7 diapers will fill a medium size suitcase; two packages will fill a large suitcase. Under-the-bed plastic storage units also are great for storing diapers. So long as the diapers are sealed in their original plastic packaging, you can store the overflow in your attic or basement for months.

DO DIAPERS EXPIRE?

Some diaper manufacturers place no expiration date on their diapers; others place a date, saying that the date is required by law, but that their diapers do not expire. Nonetheless, a typical disposable diaper is said to have an expiration date of about three years. Normally, diapers may show discoloration, but with little or no effect on performance. If stored for years in high temperatures, the elastics may degrade and tapes may lose some of their stickiness.

“AB/DL”

FYI: you will come across sites referencing the term “AB/DL.” This stands for “adult baby/diaper lover,” which is a fetish. Some of the AB/DL vendor sites have very useful, high-quality, products and information about diapers. Some merchants, e.g. Fetware or its sister company, DriWare, have excellent products.

RECOMMENDED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Diaper reviews - perhaps the two best diaper reviews that include detailed diaper specifications are at the links below:

XP Medical Adult Diaper Review and Testing:

<http://www.xpmedical.com/dtest.html>

The Incontinence Support Center's Diaper Testing:

http://www.incontinencesupport.org/diaper_testing.php

This paper is only an introduction to the selection and wear of adult diapers. For a more advanced and detailed treatment of the subject, see the excellent "The New Diaper Primer:"

http://www.incontinencesupport.org/primer_index.php

INTERNET SUPPORT GROUPS

I strongly encourage everyone who is incontinent to participate in one or more of the three Internet incontinence support groups listed below. These groups focus on how to live with functional bowel and/or bladder incontinence (regardless of the cause) and how best to select and wear diapers. The number of new messages per day in each group is very small, but it can be extremely instructive to read the archives of past messages.

- 1) Incontinence Support Center at <http://www.incontinencesupport.org/>
- 2) Incontinence Support Group - Yahoo! group "incont"
- 3) AdultIncon - Yahoo! group "adultincon"

SPECIAL THANKS

We learn from our own experiences and (hopefully) from the experiences of others. I want to offer my very special thanks to those who made significant contributions to this paper, including "Zenute" who provided a unique and very personal woman's perspective, ILuvLA who, as I do, loves to travel and provided highly valuable suggestions on how to do it better, "Rope_Wrench" for his valuable insights into cloth diapers, and "SeattleDoug" for his experience in using diapers while in a wheelchair. My thanks also those who did not directly contribute to this paper, but who contributed to my own understanding of how best to live with adult diapers.

Best wishes to all and hoping that you stay dry,

John Davis (JDinVirginia)

(Revised March, 2015)

[© John Davis 2015. You are free to repost this paper online, or to pass it on to any person or group who may have an interest in it. My only requirement is that its authorship be credited and that it be disseminated without changes]

If you have questions or wish to provide useful feedback, you may email me at [jdinvirginia \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:jdinvirginia@yahoo.com).