



# **the first month**

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A Premier Pediatrics  
Program for New Parents

## **6 Ways to Go Green for Baby**

As a pediatrician and a parent of three boys, I have seen products change and the world evolve into a more environmentally friendly place to raise children. With each of my boys, I've established a healthier living environment, but also worked on modeling the message that we need to protect our environment and respect it.

Now that I'm a more earth-friendly mom, I'm giving the same advice to my patients, and helping them go green inside and outside their home. From avoiding harsh chemicals in cleaning products to eating more organic and sustainable foods, here's 6 tips for creating a sustainable home and raising children to care about the environment.

1. **Volunteer!** Actions speak louder than words. Model for your children that protecting the earth is important by volunteering with them in environmentally friendly projects.
2. **Choose organic foods.** Organically grown foods are grown without use of fertilizers, genetically modified foods, radiation or synthetic pesticides, and these foods are naturally non-gmo. And luckily, choosing organic food for your family has never been easier. Start your baby off right by using organic ingredients early on for first foods. If you are making your own baby food, choose organic ingredients. If you are buying baby/kid food, there's plenty of organic tasty options that expose little ones to a variety of tastes and textures, from brands like [Ella's Kitchen](#).
3. **Create a sustainable nursery.** When choosing the paint and furniture for your child's bedroom, make sure your choices are free of harmful chemicals. Look for products that are VOC-free and open the windows after painting. The same mindful choices go for everything in the room - including your crib mattress. As babies grow and rollovers happen, it is important to look for a 'breathable' mattress vs. organic. Conventional, and even organic mattresses, are typically covered with a waterproof cover that contain PVCs that your child is breathing in so it is important to choose a mattress that does not off gas any noxious chemicals. Choose a mattress like [The Wovenaire Crib Mattress by Newton](#), which is made from food grade polymers and 90% air, is 100% sustainable and better yet, washable.
4. **Avoid harsh chemicals when cleaning your home.** Conventional cleaning products are filled with chemicals that are known respiratory toxicants, allergens, neurotoxins and carcinogens. It's not healthy for you or your children to regularly breathe in. Choose products that are formulated with plant-based ingredients and that disclose all of their ingredients. Are you a do it yourself kind of gal? Fill a spray bottle filled with equal parts water and distilled white vinegar. Non-toxic and effective! If not, there's some great safe, off-the-shelf options from brands like Seventh Generation or [dapple](#).
5. **Choose carefully when it comes to soaps, detergents and lotions.** Choose fragrance free products for washing you little one's clothing. The fragrance in many products can contain harmful chemicals and irritate your little one's skin. If you're love a sweet smell, guggle's new line of [lotions & potions](#) uses safe, plant-based ingredients in its bath and body products. However, if the fragrance seems to be irritating your baby's skin then a fragrance-free option may be best. You can discuss this with your pediatrician if you have concerns.

6. **Avoid plastic containers.** Many types of plastic bottles or food storage containers, both disposable ones and reusable ones, contain synthetic chemicals such as BPA and other toxicants. When storing or buying baby food, choose glass or stainless steel containers, both of which do not emit any gasses or chemicals. If you're a busy mom on the go, don't be afraid of using pouches, some of which are actually also recyclable - Ella's Kitchen and several other brands work with the baby food pouch recycling program Terracycle. You are helping the earth, protecting your children, and you can also save money as well by not buying disposable plastics.

When it comes to my boys – and my patients' – health, I always take the better safe than sorry approach. Exposure to toxins in foods, cleaning products or other areas can have long-term effects on the developing child. Scientists still don't understand the full impact of these chemicals, but these simple steps – think of it as “environmental childproofing” – can help protect your family.