

Buy Buy Baby

Time to stock your nursery? Shop with our experts' top product picks



BEST BABY CARE PRODUCTS

Your crying baby is Björned around your neck. Her diaper needs changing. You're sleep-deprived. And you're lost in the pastel-hued wilderness of the baby care products aisle.

You want to start your little one off right and use only the best, of course, but every item on the shelf seems to claim it is fragrance-free, unscented, organic, natural—the words make your head spin. What does it all mean? How do you know what's marketing hype and what's real? What do you need to know when reading labels?

We turned to the pros for help. Our panel of experts—two pediatric dermatologists, **Sharon A. Glick, MD**, and **Colette D. Lieber, MD**, and health and wellness expert **Keri Glassman, MS, RD, CDN**—judged dozens of baby care products on five criteria: scientific soundness; brand promise; price; look, smell, and feel; and overall excellence.

Read on to see if any of the choices you were considering in the haze of the baby aisle made the cut.

DAN SAEILINGER

EXPERT TIP

Believe the Hype?

Smell test Labels can be deceiving, particularly when it comes to “unscented” vs. “fragrance-free.” “‘Unscented’ could have a masking fragrance, which your child could be allergic to,” Lieber says. Masking fragrances may be added to neutralize odor, Glick says, so “when given the choice, opt for fragrance-free.”

Don’t cry “baby” Another personal favorite that didn’t quite fit anywhere on the experts’ list (and isn’t labeled “baby”): Eucerin’s Aquaphor Healing Ointment. “I put it on my kids’ lips and cheeks in the cold,” says Glassman. It also helps ward off diaper rashes. “It’s one of the major products I recommend to patients,” Glick says.

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BEST DIAPER RASH CURE

Its name might sound funny, but the winner in this category is nothing to laugh about. **Boudreaux’s Butt Paste (\$4.99)** beat its old-standby competitors by a landslide, in part because it’s a paste, which is more effective than a cream and provides a better barrier against urine and other irritants. It also has an especially high concentration of zinc oxide, which helps speed healing, and is fragrance-free. To offset the cost—the only downside our experts noted—use it only to clear up a rash and opt for a less expensive product for everyday use. “All my patients love it,” Glick says, “because it works.”



physical block. “You never want to put a chemical block on a baby,” Lieber says. A chemical block protects by absorbing UV radiation, takes 20 minutes to work, and could cause contact dermatitis, explains Glick, while a physical block reflects sunlight and won’t cause dermatitis. Although the experts commented on the thickness of this product—it can be a little difficult to spread—it’s ideal for babies 12 months and under because there’s less skin to cover (vs. a toddler’s frame, for example, where a spray formula might be better).

BEST BODY WASH/ SHAMPOO COMBO

Until the age of 1 or 2, your little (and likely bald) one doesn’t need a separate shampoo and body wash. And, surprisingly, the two-in-one product you use “doesn’t have to say ‘baby’ on it,” Lieber says. “That’s just marketing.” Because **Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser (\$7.63)** was created specifically for sensitive skin, it’s the ideal wash for a newborn. “Cetaphil is as gentle as water,” Glick says, “and it’s what I recommend to all my patients.”



BEST BODY LOTION

“There have been a lot of studies about the benefits of touch and massage,” Glassman says, “and using lotion is a great way for mother and baby to bond.” The best way to do that is with **Aveeno Baby Daily Moisture Lotion (\$6.29)**, which bested the other brands because it spreads easily and is fragrance-free. It also protects the skin more than other lotions, because it contains soothing allantoin. Glick applauds its nongreasy feel, saying it lacks the stickiness of a cream and is ideal for everyday use. “You want this in your nursery,” she says.



BEST WIPES

Parents use these handy cloths for more than just wiping baby’s bottom, says Glassman, who finds them especially useful for cleaning her kids’ hands and faces after playtime at the park, where soap and water aren’t always available. And for derrieres and hands and faces, **Earth’s Best TenderCare Chlorine Free Baby Wipes (\$3.79)** were the panel’s top pick. They’re hypoallergenic, unscented, and alcohol-free and contain aloe vera and vitamin E. These wipes are also the sturdiest and cleanest of the bunch. “I like the texture, and they feel solid and strong,” Glick says.—*Jennifer Dixon*



BEST SUNSCREEN

Exposure to the sun is harmful for everyone, but especially so for babies 6 months and younger “because the skin is thinner and more sensitive,” Lieber explains. But if you can’t avoid the sun, keep your baby’s skin safe with our experts’ favorite block, **California Baby SPF 30+ Sunscreen Lotion (\$19.99)**, which impressed them with its UVA and UVB protection. Yes, it’s pricey but it also scored points because it’s a



Meet Our Baby Product Pros



SHARON A. GLICK, MD
Director, pediatric dermatology,
SUNY Health Science Center at
Brooklyn, New York



KERI GLASSMAN, MS, RD, CDN
Nutritionist and president,
Keri Glassman, A Nutritious Life
New York City



COLETTE D. LIEBER, MD
Director, Pediatric
Dermatology Associates
Mahwah, N.J.

Which other baby care products won honorable mentions? Find out at www.WebMD.com.