

## **One-Handed Baby Care**

“I am an occupational therapist, and my husband has a below elbow and a below knee amputation. He is completely independent in caring for our kids. I wanted to pass along some of our “words of advice” based on our experience. Good luck with your baby!” -*Dora Quilty*

Breastfeeding: get a Medela Double electric pump and start pumping from the hospital on. It will be less frustrating and you get all the benefits of breast milk for the baby but no sore/bloody nipples, no frustration of positioning the baby, switching breasts without using your prosthetic because it's the middle of the night etc... Pumping also allows you to let others feed the baby in the night and when you need a break.

Feeding: baby positioned in the crook of the residual limb/prosthetic feed with your hand, allows you to follow the baby's head around as baby “eats” without trying to get the prosthetic hand to turn.

Stroller/car seat: get a travel system, more expensive but so necessary. The car seat should have a one push button release not a two button push. It allows you to remove the car seat using the prosthetic and no fine motor. The five point harness should have a one-touch tighten and release mechanism.

Chicco keyfit travel system has a stroller that you can open and fold down completely with one hand. It has a car seat that you tighten with one hand. The release can be operated with the gross motor action of a prosthetic hand.

Diaper bag: **NO ZIPPERS.** Get a shoulder bag that has a Velcro-close flap. It allows for easy access with no frustration when closing.

Changing Table: don't put a cover on the changing pad. It will be much easier to clean the surface of the changing pad as is. The baby is likely going to soil the changing surface while you are changing the diaper, and

the last thing you want to do is stop everything while you try to change the changing pad cover and the baby.

Diaper pail: **NO DIAPER GENIE!** It isn't one-handed user friendly. Get one that can open with your foot and just toss the diaper in and it closes by gravity. There is one called Dekor it is an easy flap no need to use your hands.

Hand cleaning: keep a pump bottle of hand sanitizer at all diaper changing stations and by the bottle prep area. It is an easy way to clean your hand and not have to put baby down somewhere while you go lather up in the sink.

Swaddle: Kiddopotamus makes a pre-done swaddle that you velcro in place, very one-handed user friendly, better than the Halo or sleep sacks.

Diapers: don't be afraid to clasp the baby's leg with your prosthetic hand, it will rest comfortably between the thumb and index finger for the first few months.

Bedding: get a few mattress protectors as your diapering will be loose at first as you adjust to using the prosthetic thus the diapers will leak =) bit of a learning curve takes a week or two.

Clothing: separates are easier than onsies. It won't matter how cute the outfit is if it's difficult to get on/off the baby: it's just extra stress. When using onsies, don't snap the middle snap. It allows for easier removal of the onsie when you change diapers. Don't even bother with long sleeve onsies, because it's very difficult to thread baby's arms through the narrow holes.

Socks: as the baby gets older keep the socks turned inside out. Stick your hand in the sock grab the foot/toes, open your hand like a star fish as you roll the sock onto the foot.

Highchair: look for a highchair that has a one-mechanism pull-release located at the front of the tray, not the one button thingy on each side.

Boogers: Graco makes an electric nose sucker (don't have to bother with the bulb and getting it to pull out the snot/boogers). It comes with two attachments, one that goes up in the nose one that sucks from nostril. Don't use the attachment that goes up in the nose till the baby is 3 months old.

Crib: don't get one with a drop-side, fixed sides are safer and less frustrating for you.

Bathing: look for an infant bath tub that isn't reclined and purchase a "bath sling." The sling is an incline you put the infant on to keep baby in place. You use it on the sink counter initially and when baby is moving around more you put the sling in the baby tub. You have more control over the slippery baby with one hand when you use the bath sling.

More great one-handed survival tips at [www.HandwritingForHeroes.com](http://www.HandwritingForHeroes.com)