Podcast Intro and Episode Overview

So to recap, the baby clothing you actually need to get are onesies and pants that have the hands and feet attached to them so they can cover them up, and the right sleep sack or sleep suit for your baby's age, then some seasonal or outdoor wear.

You don't need any of those scratch mitts or socks. And babies don' need shoes. Hi, you're listening to season four of the Baby Manual Podcast, the podcast that helps new parents all over the world navigate the everyday challenges that arise when you have a young baby.

This season will help you decide which pregnancy, baby, and toddler items you actually need and which ones are a waste of time and money. I'm pulling on the knowledge of hundreds of thousands of new parents around the world, other pediatricians, doctor moms, the Academy of Pediatrics, breaking pediatric news sites, all to give you the best information and recommendations that I can, because I know how overwhelming it can be.

I am your host, a pediatrician, mom, and author, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual Podcast. Today, we're going to be talking all about baby clothing and what clothing to buy.

Because I know that when I was first pregnant, the first thought that came to my mind is, I got to get some onesies and some tiny little socks. So let's talk about what you actually need to make sure that you have enough but not too much of right things.

Also, just keep in mind, clothing is the number one thing that your friends are going get you at your baby shower. You know, take that with a grain of salt, but you probably don't need to buy as much clothing as you think.

So to start off with onesies, onesie are amazing. I love the ones that have short sleeves and just the three snaps in the crotch, the plain white ones is all you need.

You could do colored ones, cute ones if you like. Keep in mind you want these in newborn in zero to three months while you're still pregnant, you know before your baby comes because you don' know exactly how big they'll be.

If you have a history of small babies in your family, or if you think your baby is measuring small during the pregnancy, you might want to even have like a couple of preemie size onesies on hand, but your babies just going to be going through several of these a day.

Choosing Onesies and Layering Basics

They spit up all the time, they pee and poop all time. It gets everywhere. So these are really just utility clothing. You just need a handful, like at least, so I would say in terms of onesie, if your buying them yourself, get yourself a few, five to 10. People will give you way more than that, I'm sure.

And if you've already gotten some from friends or you already have some on hand, you probably don't need to get any more of these. You also, on top of like those thin onesies, these work as like a really good sort of under layer for babies to be a comfortable temperature.

They should be wearing approximately what we are wearing as adults at room temperature, but with one extra layer. So if think of this onesie as an undershirt, they're great for that layer, The other option is these sort of outerwear onesies, which are the ones with the long sleeves.

So with those, I would say get ones that have long sleeve that the mitts of them will fold over and you can, you know, they act as scratch mitt because the regular scratch mits just don't stay on their hands.

They fall off in a second. But if you get the sleeves that fold over, these long sleeve ones usually have feet attached also. So you want the footy ones and you wants ones that have a zipper that goes all the way from the neck down to one foot.

And the zipper, the best ones are the ones with a two-way zipper. You can unzip it from the top or you can unzip it form the bottom, which is amazing for in the middle of the night.

If you have to change a diaper, it's going to happen, sorry, if you're not ready yet. So this is really, really helpful because you could un-zip from a leg.

You don't have take off the whole onesie and you don' have them all the way out of it, from top either. Also, these onesies will pretty much always have something over the top that protects the tip of the zipper.

So it's just this little like fold over piece of fabric so that the zippers doesn't catch your baby's neck and so in case the zip pull were to come off that they wouldn't choke on it.

We've got some recommendations in the show notes for all of these, but basically the Carter's onesie are the ones that I found that by default typically have all these features.

But yeah, we've some links for you below so you can see what we're looking at. All right. And then in terms of like separate pieces of clothing, so shirts and pants are not as helpful for newborns, but with some exceptions.

So I like the kimono shirts in newborn size only, and those are the ones that kind of fold over and there's like a single snap on one side and then you fold the other side over, there is a snap in that side, like on the waist.

And these typically will have fold-over sleeves as well. These are really good for, it basically has pajamas for your baby because they should be swaddled for that first month or so until they're busting out of it.

And we'll get to swaddles in a second. But the kimono shirt inside the swadle is great because it keeps the top half of them warm, but you can still get the diaper really easily.

and they're going often at night. They're pottying really often for the first couple months of life, so it's really nice to have that feature there. After they are out of the swaddle age, they do better off in a sleep sack.

or a sleep suit and in that case you probably want a onesie inside. The shirts tend to ride up and they're moving around a lot in those, you know, once they are out of swaddle age and the shirts they ride on their bodies and like, they feel like they just, kind of get around their neck and choke them.

and or get over their face and suffocate them. So they're almost more dangerous than helpful once they are out of the swaddle. After they were like a year old and walking around, it's nice to have shirts again.

But up until that age when they basically laying all of time, shirts are useless and just dangerous. The pants now, so pants can go over onesies like those short sleeve onesie, you can do pants over that.

Newborn Shirts, Pants, and Scratch Protection

If you're getting pants for your newborn, I would only get the ones that have the feet attached to them, And if you're thinking about getting socks, I would say forget about socks.

Instead, get these pants with the feet attached. They're basically, they're like tights, you know, or just footed pants and they just slip on. they'll stay on, which is nice.

And they will keep your baby's feet warm, so they won't get kicked off like socks do. But also like regular pants are just kind of useless. Like they are they're not really doing a lot.

They're going over a diaper so they don't need that extra layer of like warmth there. they often write up on their legs. If they do not have the feet attached, they just like end up kind of scooching up like shorts.

So their regular pants are basically useless again in the non-walking age. I would say the pants with the with a feet are attached are great. Now, in terms of like foot and hand stuff, so babies' nails, when they're first born, they are weirdly like sharp, but also flimsy.

They're really difficult to cut, They are really tiny and hard to see, and it's just terrifying to, to the cut their little nails. And so a lot of babies and newborns, especially in the first like week or two of life, get little scratches all over their face.

It's not dangerous. it is just a cosmetic thing. But gosh, I always like, I know I felt so bad for my babies when they did that, and I feel like a lot of moms do.

And they're like, oh, I just wish they weren't scratching themselves. So we get these scratch mitts, right, which are these little, like they have elastic around the wrist.

They look like mittens without a thumb. It's just like solid thing. they fall off. First time parents, I feel like always have these and we're like, yes, awesome.

I love that you're prepared and thinking about this, but also unfortunately these just don't work. And then you see these more experienced parents in the hospital and they've got baby socks over the baby's arms.

and I'm like okay, Yes, you know that the scratch mitts are useless and that these will stay on better. but they're still not awesome. So the ones that really have a lot of experience or that work with babies a lie will come into the hospital with those onesies that have the fold over hands because those will stop your baby from scratching themselves on the face.

They're very easy to use. And so I would say, forget about the scratch mitts, Babies don't need shoes. It's actually really not good for them to have shoes until they're about two years old.

it's really better for him to learn to walk and bare feet so that their feet get used to the ground. They can, you know, sort of shape themselves as they grow and not get shaped to a shoe.

If you want to get shoes for your baby as like sort of a dress up accessory type of thing, the ones in the newborn phase are called crib shoes. They're basically just they don't really have soles on them.

The sole is soft, so it's usually made of leather or fabric and they would slip if they tried to walk in them, they're not made for walking. So those crib shoes are your little booties or whatever, they're cute.

They don't really stay on just like socks. So, you know, if you need to get a pair for like a family photo or something, that's about all they are good for.

The last for a minute or two and then they'll get kicked off. Slippers, on the other hand, we actually ended up using slippers a lot with my second one.

And the ones that I recommend are we had these fuzzy slippers. So because they were fuzzy, they had a little grip to them. They were stretchy. It had some elastic, so you can stretch them to put them on, and then they kind of grip when they get on around the ankle, which babies don't really have ankles, but these were just grippy enough but not tight.

and we would put them on over a onesie with the feet. So it was like putting them over socks, except if you put on on their own or with socks they would get kicked off in a second.

But if we put it on a one-zie they actually stayed on for a little bit longer. We would use inside then maybe another

layer when we were going out or if he was in the carrier or the wrap or something.

I would say slippers might be helpful, we'll link the ones that we like from the show notes. In terms of sleepwear stuff, so for newborns, for the first month or so of life, they should be swaddled.

Now you can swaddle them with a blanket. You can wrap it up sort of like a burrito. I have instructions in my book, The Baby Manual, about how to do that.

But basically, it's It's definitely an option, but it's, unfortunately nowadays, not the best option anymore. So really what I think is the, best is these sleep sacks that have, sorry, these swaddle sags that has Velcro in them.

It sort of like a U-shaped, I don't know, bottom, that you put their legs into. And then that part has velcro. That comes up over their leg, up to their chest.

and there's Velcro on the front of it. And then you wrap the first side around, and then there is going to be like two sides, like, two flaps sticking out behind their arms.

You wrap that first arm over that arm and it tucks it in place. Then you wrapped the second one over the other side and tuck that in and that Velcros down.

And so now your baby's arms are nice and swaddled, nice, and tight. They can't really bust out of it very easily. Once they get bigger and stronger, they can bust it out.

So it's not going to prevent them developmentally at that stage from getting out their swaddle, but it'll keep them in it at the newborn phase. And it is very easy to use.

You don't need any skill. It's fine. If they're wiggling, then they won't wiggle their way. Like they will not loosen it as they are getting into it. Really nice and easy.

I'll link those below. So again, it's really funny to see in the hospital when parents come in with one of those. And I'm like, this is obviously not your first kid.

You know what you're doing. Love seeing those, they're super, super helpful to have. If you have one, bring it to the Hospital. i'm going to do an episode later about travel essentials.

But with that one I am going say what should have in your hospital go bag and also what to put in a diaper bag for when you are out and about. Okay, so after they are of the swaddle newborn phase.

They go through this phase from about age a month-ish to four to six months when they're rolling where they are laying there on their back in bed and they don't quite have enough strength to stay in a position that makes them comfortable and if they startle, it wakes them up fully and then they get moving and are kicking and happy and awake and you are just asleep.

So for that phase specifically, what I recommend is the Merlin Magic Sleep Suit. I absolutely love this thing. One of my friends gave me hers after her baby outgrew it.

Sleepwear: Swaddles and Sleep Sacks

She's like, you need this. You only need it for a short time. If you have a friend that has a baby that's a couple of months older, then you ask if they have one or if you can find it at a thrift store.

But if not, get one. for these couple of months, it will save your sleep, your baby's sleep and your sanity. Because it's just this like padded, It looks like a down coat, but it is not down.

It's like it, like, a blanket, you know, Like a paded blanket. But the hands and feet are open. So it kind of for all sizes

and it just keeps them in this position like starfish.

And so you lay them on their back in that and they're in the safe star fish position all night. If they startle, its just like thick enough that they don't fully startle themselves awake, but it's not heavy.

Just a quick side note, also going back to like the newborn swaddles, some companies have weights in the swaddles or in their sleep sacks or the sleep suits that are over the baby's body and they're meant to feel like a hand on the Baby to help them sleep.

These are not considered safe because the weight over the course of the night, it can be too much for your baby and they can stop breathing. So these are not considered safe.

But the Merlin sleep suit is not heavy. It's not weighted, so it's nice and safe, and it has just enough thickness to it that it holds your it's not weighted on their chest and so it doesn't make it harder for them to breathe so that's very safe.

I love this one. So yes, get one of those if your baby's in that age range and then after that, so once your Baby is able to roll over the Merlin Magic Sleepsit is not safe anymore and at that point they should be in a sleep sack and with a Sleep Sack or a sleep suit.

But I like, I would say a sleepsack at this age because they're rolling, but they don't fully have control of their arms and legs. And so what happens is they roll over and their leg gets through one of the slats in the crib.

It's not like it's like stuck, like pinched in there, but it is like they can't figure out how to get it out because they accidentally rolled themselves in that position and they just don't know how control their body enough to move away from that.

So when they're in, that phase, you want to use a sleep sack that covers their legs. And so it like, basically the top half of it looks like a onesie, it has sleeves, the bottom half looks like a dress that zippers closed, and they can still roll around in them, they still move in, but their legs aren't going to get stuck through the slats.

And their arms too, because they're nice and slippery in those things. So my favorite sleep sack is linked in the show notes there. But what I would say to look for in a good sleep stack is, well, there's a lot of variety nowadays.

So some have long sleeves, some short sleeves. Depending on how warm or cold you like to keep the house at night, if you and your partner tend to sleep with blankets or not, you tend feel cold or feel hot when you sleep, that might influence the weight of the sleep sac that you choose.

whether it's got sleeves or not. But I'd say take those into account. It should have a zipper that goes from the neck down all the way to the bottom. Again, the best ones have the zipper goes two ways.

So it can unzip from bottom so you can just get the diaper out at night time and change it. Or one that unzips from top so that you change the whole outfit.

they should have a little flap that covers the top of the zipper, but my favorite sleep suit that I'm linking below is the Kaia baby sleep suite. It has also a temperature gauge inside and so you can actually open up and see how comfortable your baby is and whether they feel too hot or not.

So that's really cool. And it has camel wool inside, which is sustainable and warm and breathable. I would say also, yeah, definitely look for a fabric that The sleep sack is basically like a wearable blanket for your baby.

So if you pick it up and you're like, oh, this feels like an ice blanket that I'd like to sleep under, then that's a good one, right? And so, yeah, anyways, I would say find one that feels good.

I'm going to link my favorite one. That I think feels that in terms of blankets. So babies cannot use blankets until

they are at least a year old. And at that point, after a years, it's okay for them to sleep with a blanket, but they still can have a pillow until their two years old in the crib or in their toddler bed, I guess after that age.

So no blankets, until age one, no pillows until aged two. Now, There are baby blankets that are sold and I will recommend them later when we get to the episode that's on furniture and linens, but not for sleeping.

So baby blanket are great for like throwing on the ground for playing. Like if you're outside in a park and you don't want them on grass, you just want to let them play on ground.

It's good for that. Good for laying over those changing stations that were in bathrooms. or if you can't find one to put over your lap or a chair to change your baby in public or in the car or whatever.

But yeah, blankets are not safe for babies. So you're not going to need to be buying any blankets for your babies to sleep with at least. And the same goes for those sweet little like snuggle toys that are like, you know, a little stuffed animal that has like a blanket attached to it.

They're really cute, really sweet, they look like something, like they're like aw, it'd be so adorable to see my baby snuggling that. Unfortunately, those are not safe.

Remember for safe sleep, there should be nothing in the crib or bassinet with your baby other than a pacifier. they are allowed to have a Pacifier and that's it So no blankets, they're allowed to be swaddled.

So like a swaddle or sleep suit or a sleep sack or wearable blanket alternative is what they are allowed. They're not allowed an actual blanket in there.

No stuffed animals, no bumpers in the cribs, none of those like, I don't know, screen things they used to put on crips. Those are all considered unsafe.

All right, so for outerwear stuff, this is kind of my last category of things. If it is cold when your baby is born, you're gonna want a warm hat. And actually, even if it's not cold, your gonna a hat for warmth.

So if its, say, late spring or summertime when you baby's born those thin cotton hats that are kind the same thickness as onesies and they usually come as part of that onesie set, those ones are great for during, you know, spring and summer babies to wear as like that extra warmth because babies do lose a lot of heat through their head, especially in that first month of life when they're still not good at thermoregulating.

And I mean, really the first year they are getting better all the time, but that 1st month or so you really should put a hat on them most of the In the winter, I would say you want ideally like a knit or crochet hat for your baby to wear.

And baby's heads grow ridiculously fast. So you're going to need a bunch of sizes of hats. You want a hat in a lot of different sizes.

Outerwear, Hats, and Seasonal Extras

from you know like say this big around to uh like a orange circumference to like maybe a grapefruit or a little larger circumference around that should get you through at least those first couple of months when they're wearing hats but yeah so winter hats the knit and crochet ones are nice because they are stretchy and they can fit you for a bit longer and their really warm.

You don't need a jacket for your baby. Babies should not have anything padded on their body when you put them in a car seat. It is not safe. it creates this like floofy layer that you can't tighten the seatbelt down enough, but it's not tight enough to hold them.

In the event of a crash, so nothing pad on the baby in the wintertime in carseat. So I'd say you're not gonna need a jacket or one of those like puffy onesies unless you are planning on taking your baby out not in the car.

So, you know, if you were planning wearing them in a carrier that goes outside of a Jacket, that might be a reason to get one those or pushing them around in stroller outside or doing a lot of commuting that involves outside time, then that is, it might worth it.

But you gonna have to take it off every time they get into their car seat if your going in car So I'd say, you know, You might want a warm thing if you live in a place that you drive most places.

If you're walking most place you might a handful of these. In terms of like So I have leg warmers on this list as an outerwear thing, but also it's a good alternative to pants.

So legwarmers are sort of a, they're kind of helpful when it is cold or when its like cold in the house and your baby is kindof roaming around or you just want an extra layer but they have a onesie that doesn't have legs on it.

Or maybe it has legs and you want extra layers on their legs. Leg warmers are sometimes helpful. Yeah, I mean, it's not like a widely sold thing, but I felt like the leg warmors that were handmade were one of my favorite things that I had for my babies.

Just because they add that little bit of warmth, if you have a family friend that knits or crochets and they want to make your baby socks, tell them to do leg warmer instead.

And they'll probably be even more excited to make those because socks are tricky. You have to turn the heel and you have close the toe, and they don't stay on.

And leg warmers do stay and, they're easier to makes. So I, yeah. They look really adorable and can help keep their legs warm. It's like they can be useful.

I'd say yeah, if you a friend that makes them, If you don' have any friends that knit or crochet, you dont necessarily have go out and get legwarmers for your baby.

In terms of other sort of two random miscellaneous things, a swim diaper. So a swimming diaper is good for if it's summer or if you go swimming a lot.

Babies can go swim really as early as three months of age. Talk to your pediatrician before taking your baby into a pool ever. But, and not that they can't go to swimming like you can put them in the water.

I mean, like, you walk into the holding your babies from about age, three month of the age but definitely talk to you doctor first and get the go ahead.

And so a swim diaper is nice because it's something that they can wear into the pool. Like a regular diaper soaks up all moisture, all water. And, so it'll just soak up the water and get heavy and then fall off when you get out of the, water, and also not holding any pure poop, like it becomes useless because its saturated.

So, what a swimming diaper does is it really just mesh and it catches poop. It catches all baby poops, even that like weirdly squishy newborn poop will get caught in it.

It does not catch pee. So if you have your baby in a swim diaper and you're holding them on your lap and they pee, it's going to go straight through it and your going get wet.

If they poop, the liquid part of the poop is also going go through and then you are going wet, so swim diapers are really only good while you in the water.

catching poop only. And then once you get out of the water, you take them back out and put them in a regular diaper. So yeah, You might want to have a swim diaper if you think like you might go to pool with your baby.

Then a hooded bath towel. My husband made me put this one on the list. He said, make sure you tell them about

the hooding bath towels because that was so handy and something I didn't think we would actually need.

I'm like, yeah. you do need a towel for your baby after the bath. But what we like about the hooded one, it's really just like a square towel with one corner folded over into a hood.

So you put that corner over their head and then it makes a nice like diamond shape. And you can easily like wrap the sides over the arms and wrap their feet up in it.

It's just a very quick like 1, 2, 3, as soon as they're out of the tub, they are instantly swaddled up and warm and then you can carry them into the, you know, the bedroom and change them after that.

But hooded bath towels are actually really nice to have and I wasn't sure where to put these and so I just put them in newborn clothing stuff. All right, so I hope you enjoyed this episode of the Baby Manual podcast, and I hoped this was helpful for you.

I would love to hear if you have any feedback. i'm going to put my email in the show notes as well.

Wrap-Up and Final Recommendations

So you can send me an email if have feedback, if there's anything that you're like, you forgot this, I'd love hear about it. Also any requests for future episodes, i'd like to know about that too. I am not able to answer any medical questions by email.

Unfortunately, If you do reach out with a question of You know, this is going on with my baby. How can I help? Can you help me decide what to do? I am not able to help with that by email, unfortunately.

But other podcast related things I absolutely can help. So I look forward to hearing from you. I hope that this was helpful. Share it with a friend. Next week, we're going to talk about the big baby items.

So now that we've gotten over the like really fun, exciting things to buy, We're gonna talk About what are the Big pieces of furniture that you need? What do you Need to make space in your house for?

How to get your nursery ready? That kind of thing. So to recap, the baby clothing you actually need to get are onesies and pants that have the hands and feet attached to them so they can cover them up, and the right sleep sack or sleep suit for your baby's age, then some seasonal or outdoor wear.

You don't need any of those scratch mitts or socks. And babies don' t need shoes. Thanks for listening. Remember all of the links from this episode are in the show notes and you can always go to my linktree which is l-i-n-k-t-r dot e-e slash d- r- k- e i- m.

If you know anybody who is pregnant or has a little baby tell them about this show. Maybe they would like to listen to this podcast they might find something helpful in here.

And if you know any friends who are pregnant and want to get them something for their baby shower, I would definitely recommend my book, The Baby Manual.

It's meant to be all inclusive. Really, all the questions that arise in the first year of your baby's life are in that book. So Baby manual is also linked in The Show Notes and on my link tree.

Have a wonderful day.