

What's up, baby?

Blogs are hot in the baby market but they're not all that's new, writes **Amanda Horswill**

THE hottest thing in the baby product market is not a product. It's information, shared between parents-to-be in chat rooms. Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo co-director Julie Rocke says most expectant and new mothers look to blogs to find out what the latest products are and which ones work best.

"The way people shop for products has changed heaps since we started the expo 11 years ago," Rocke says.

"We keep an eye on the various websites to basically see what people are saying about us. They might go to the expo on a Friday, and by that night they are telling people on a blog that they should go the next day and check out a special deal or a new nappy or a steriliser."

"Ultimately, they are looking for something that makes their life easier or caring for a baby or toddler easier. A lot of talk is

about time-saving." She says research at the show showed that most new mothers worried about breastfeeding, and would most likely seek that advice at the expo.

The most popular products at the shows were breastfeeding pillows.

"My kids are now 14 and 17, and during my time you just bought the essentials like a cot, pram, change table, baby bath," she says. "Now, it's a question of 'How many accessories can I get?'"

"It's a case of: What's next? They have even been investing in a washing machine for babies. A top loader. You kind of sit the baby in the bath and kind of swizzle it around."

She says one of the best products she had seen in recent years was a cushion attached to what looks like a bum bag.

"It's called a Hippychick, and you wear it when you are carrying a child on your hip," she says. "It's the ultimate. A dream. The difference is amazing. But it's about \$10 retail. I wouldn't care — you'd save that on physio treatments."

Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Friday-Sunday, 10am-6pm Friday, 10am-5pm, Saturday and Sunday, tickets from \$10, adults \$14, children under 14 free



Hot products

Clean Shopper, \$49.95, material lining for shopping trolley seats, cleanshopper.com.au or 1800 635 369

My Wee Ride, \$165.95, bike seat that allows child to sit in front of rider, Indooroopilly Super Cycles Shop, 8, 34 Coonan St, Indooroopilly

Leander bed, about \$1500, cot to enclosed bed to child's bed, from selected baby stores

Lullabub, \$249.95, remote control cot rocking device, pictured, available from selected baby stores

Splash bottle dryer, \$79.95, looks good and allows bottles to dry quickly, shop.until.com.au

Bumbo seat, \$79.95, plastic seat that allows young children to sit upright, from selected baby stores

Hipseat by Hippychick, about \$100, seat attached to bum bag that supports child when you carry them on your hip, babymax.com.au



WASHING up... the TommyTub, left, has been used in European homes and maternity wards for 10 years. It uses only five litres of water, simulates the womb, is lightweight and costs \$59.95 plus \$119.95 for the multifunctional stand (www.sunros.com.au for stockists) and, top, the Bumbo seat to help babies sit upright.

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