

Real Nappies Explained

Real Nappies (also called cloth nappies, reusable nappies, washable nappies) have changed beyond all recognition from the traditional terry squares.

Modern washable nappies can be just as easy to use as disposables. Many are now shaped to fit snugly round your baby, closing with Velcro or poppers. And while some cloth nappies require a separate waterproof outer wrap, many are designed to incorporate it, giving you an “all in one” style cloth nappy.

There are three basic types of cloth nappies: the flat nappy, the fitted or shaped nappy, and the all-in-one. Flat and fitted nappies need an outer waterproof wrap. All-in-ones have their wrap attached as part of the nappy. A thin liner can also be used.

It's quite easy to mix and match, and many parents choose a couple of different products to suit their needs at different times. You can also combine them with using disposables.

All-in-One Nappies

All-in-ones are just as simple to change as a disposable, and consist of an absorbent fabric inner with an integral waterproof backing. They come in different sizes; the most popular option being birth-to-potty, thereby saving you money.

Included in this nappy type are the pocket nappies, which go on just like an all-in-one, but the absorbent fabric part is totally removable in the wash, which means they dry faster.

Pros: Ease of use is the main advantage. Most all-in-one nappies now have fold out flaps to help them dry faster, and removable boosters to improve absorbency for older babies.

Cons: You may want to buy more of them if they are your main nappy type, because the backing limits the speed of drying. They can be bulky on very tiny babies.



Fitted (shaped) Nappies

Fitted nappies are shaped to fit your baby without folding - just like a disposable. The nappies will fasten with poppers, Velcro or a nappy nipper.

There are two types of fitted nappy. Sized nappies come in various sizes (usually small and large), to give a better fit at each stage. One-size or birth-to-potty nappies adjust to fit your baby from newborn to toddler.

For both options, you will need a supply of outer waterproof wraps.



Sized Nappies

Pros: Better fit at each stage, particularly newborns.

Cons: May work out more expensive, as you need to buy two sizes of nappy – although in some cases the large size can be used as a birth to potty option.

Birth-to-Potty Nappies

Pros: Cheaper in the long run, as you only need one set.

Cons: Can be bulky on newborns. Can be outgrown by tall babies before toilet training.

Flat Nappies

The traditional terry squares are now available in different sizes, thicknesses, fabrics and absorbencies.

Prefold flat nappies are made of several layers of ordinary cotton sewn into three panels – with the central panel having most layers.

Flat terry nappies need some simple folding, and are fastened with pins or nappy nippa clips. Prefolds are slotted into a wrap, which holds them in place.

Pros: The most economical and most versatile of all the nappies. Easy to care for, absorbent and quick drying, they can be re-used for a variety of mopping up jobs!

Cons: Terries require folding. Other carers may find them harder to use, although granny may be perfectly at home with them!



Nappy Wraps (nappy covers, plastic pants)

You will need a supply of outer waterproof wraps for both flat and fitted nappies. They are all shaped to fit over a cloth nappy, and come in different sizes and some gorgeous designs. It is important that the wrap fits well at the legs and waist, so you will need to get different sizes as baby grows.

However, because you don't need a clean wrap every time you change a nappy, you will find that four or five wraps in each size will be sufficient. Always change the wrap if it gets soiled or very wet.

Getting some free advice

There are many questions that new parents ask about cloth nappies. Some of them are covered on our website page: www.recycleforoxfordshire.org.uk/realnappies



Here you will also find details of our trial kit holders, from whom you can borrow a pack of nappies for a small charge.

They all have children of their own, and can give you advice to suit your circumstances based on their own experience.

Some of the kit holders also hold Nappuccinos – coffee mornings where you can see demonstrations of how to use Real Nappies and chat to other parents.

For more information on the Oxfordshire Real Nappies kit loan scheme, call 01865 816043 or email waste.management@oxfordshire.gov.uk



www.oxford.gov.uk

