



Buying Your Nappies - a rough guide

There are many sorts of nappies available; it can be quite confusing to know what to buy. It is hard to say which is the best nappy for you – it depends on your priorities: ease, cost, drying time, looks, fashion, environmental impact, your baby's shape and habits and who else may be changing the nappies. We have an extensive collection of real nappies available for you to look at in our nappy library. We can help you work out what is best for you, but we hope this information sheet will give you a start.

Its best to have enough nappies to ensure you only need to wash when you have a full machine load, every 2 to 3 days. Line drying is more economical and energy efficient than tumble drying. Most people find they need between 20 to 24 nappies and 4 to 6 wraps in the early days, but only around 15 to 18 nappies once you child is weaned.

Useful Terminology (starting from the outside)

1. **Wrap** – provides the waterproof outer layer and stops cloths getting wet.
2. **Nappy** – provides the absorbency, can be flat or shaped.
3. **Booster** – this is an extra absorbent layer that can be put inside a nappy.
4. **Liners** – lets urine through onto the nappy but catches poo to be put in toilet.

1. WRAP

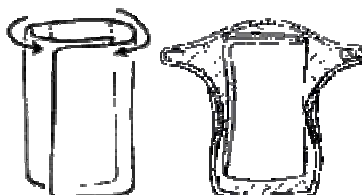
This is the waterproof outer that covers the nappy and stops the clothes getting wet. Each make of nappy has its own make of wrap which fits well. But many makes are interchangeable. They generally close with velcro or poppers, though pull up pants are still available. A snug fit is required particularly when using prefold nappies. Most wraps are made of a breathable laminated waterproof material. Wool and fleece wraps are also available, these are very breathable and a favourite for some users particularly at night time.

2. NAPPY - One and two part systems explained.....

TWO PART NAPPY SYSTEMS, - a nappy and a wrap

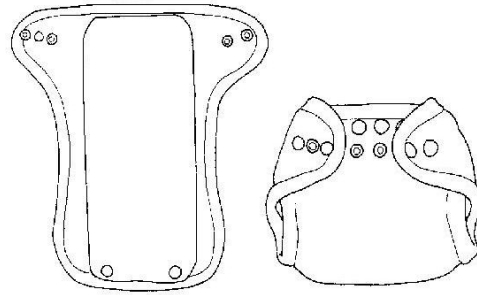
a) FLAT NAPPIES

- **Terries** are the cheapest and one of the most versatile nappies: they can be folded in various ways. Terries can be put inside various types of wraps and in some stuffable nappies (see below). **Muslins** are a fine cotton square, suitable for newborn babies, used like a terry for the fist few weeks, and can be used as a booster later on too.
- **Prefolds** are padded cloth (usually cotton) rectangles with a thicker section running through the centre; they are designed to be folded into a pad, which fits neatly into a wrap. They are inexpensive, easy to use, and work well for most babies, though some people find them less good for active toddlers.



b) SHAPED NAPPIES

- These are a multi-layered nappy, which is sewn into shape; it usually has elasticated legs and waste. They close with Velcro, poppers or a nappy clip
- Some makes last from birth to toddlers with different ways of fastening, others come in 2 or 3 sizes. The onesize nappies are more economical but the fit may be compromised.



STUFFABLE or POCKET NAPPIES

These are a wrap with an integral fleece lining. There is a slot at the back to fit an absorbent inner layer. The inners can be microfibre or in some cases you can use a folded terry or prefold. Fleece is soft next to the skin and keeps the moisture away from the baby. It comes apart to wash so makes a very convenient nappy which is easy to put on. It also washes and dries easily. You will need more wraps as you will have to change the wrap every nappy change – however as the wraps don't contain the absorbent bit they dry fast.

ONE PART NAPPY SYSTEM called “ALL IN ONE” NAPPIES



These have a waterproof outer attached to an absorbent inner, very convenient to use but expensive. They can be a problem to dry due to multiple layers of material and the integral waterproof cover, All in ones fit some babies better than others, so, are often not the best choice for every day use.

FABRIC CHOICES

Back in the old days there was cotton. Now the choice has grown. The most common choices today are:-

Cotton – either organic or not, bleached white, dyed, or natural unbleached. – A popular choice, washes well, a natural product with good absorbency.

Bamboo – a relatively new material, available dyed or unbleached. It has higher absorbency than cotton. It is a very sustainable crop, it grows very fast and seems to require few chemicals. It also appears to have anti bacterial properties which can reduce nappy rash. The down side of it's very good absorbency is that it takes longer to dry. This means that some people prefer to just use bamboo for a night time nappy. It feels very soft and silky.

Micro fibre towelling again a new comer – this time not a natural product – like bamboo it is very absorbent, the advantage of micro fibre is it dries very fast. Once it has been spun it already feels almost dry. If drying is an issue or it means you won't be tempted to tumble dry your nappies, so saving energy, this might be the nappy for you.

Hemp has been on the market for nappies for years, it is strong and absorbent.

Mixed Fibres - Nappies can also be mixed fiber, and they may contain some polyester for example which gives them stretch and strength. Some nappies have different layers for example a micro fiber core with cotton outer, so cotton is next to your baby's skin. Others have a fleece or other stay dry layer to protect your baby's skin.

3. LINERS

These can be disposable, flushable or washable. They can go inside the nappy next to the baby's skin, so keeping it dryer. A liner lets the wee through into the absorbent nappy but catches the poo which can be put down the toilet. Only use a single layer of liner for optimum performance. Be sure liners are flushable before you put them down the toilet. Liners are optional but recommended at night. An inexpensive and comfortable washable liner can easily be made from thin fleece cut into rectangles to suit your nappies.

4. BOOSTERS

These can be put inside any nappy to increase its absorbency; they are an extra few layers of cloth padding. They are useful for night time or larger children.