

# Real Nappy Information Pack



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## 1. Why use real nappies?

### Save the environment

In it's early years a baby will get through an astounding 5,000 disposable nappies! They make up about 2.6.% of the average household rubbish in a year, which in the U.K. is equivalent to the weight of nearly 70,000 double decker buses.

Hertfordshire landfill contracts run out by 2009 and there is a lack of suitable sites to create further landfill facilities.

There are also environmental costs of distributing disposable nappies to retailers and transporting them to your home.

Using real nappies reduces the amount of waste sent for disposal and also the amount of energy and non-renewable resources used to produce disposables.

The seriousness of nappy waste has been recognised by the World Health Organisation who have called for an end to 'the inclusion of urine and faecal matter in landfill sites'.

## Kinder to your baby's skin

Modern cotton nappies don't contain any chemicals and absorbent gels and the breathable fabrics are kinder to baby's skin.

## Save money

Having your first child can be one of life's great joys but can also be one of life's big financial surprises. Disposables will cost a family £5-£10 per week per child. This is literally thrown in the bin!

Real nappies will save you money in the long run. A birth to potty set of real nappies can start from as little as £70 and you are unlikely to ever spend more than £200 for your first child. Once you have bought your real nappies all nappy changes are free and you can start saving money, especially with subsequent children. If you buy your own re-usable nappies or join a nappy laundering scheme, your local authority, in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, will reimburse you up to £50 (See Sources of information about real nappies on page 8).

The Women's Environmental Network has calculated that buying and washing your own nappies can save you over £600 for your first baby compared with the cost of disposables. This includes the costs of all accessories, washing powder, electricity and wear and tear on your washing machine. Reusable cloth nappies should last for two or more children so savings increase as your family grows. As the market for cloth nappies grows so does the market for second hand nappies so you may find that once you are finished with your nappies you can sell them on. By doing this you can save even more money and reduce environmental impacts even further. You just can't lose!



## 2. Real nappies – the options available

### a) Nappy laundering

Nappy laundering services are established to make using real nappies as easy as possible. They will help you with sizing the nappies for your baby and then provide you with all the nappies you need as part of your weekly fee. These will not be yours to keep. They will then collect the dirty nappies from your door every week and replace them with clean ones.

There are a number of benefits that you can gain from using a nappy laundering service. The main one is convenience. As a busy parent you may not feel you want to take on the extra responsibilities of buying and washing real nappies. Using a nappy laundering service also gives you an opportunity to try real nappies before buying them outright.

## b) Home washing

Washing your own nappies at home allows you to make the greatest savings. You will need to have a washing machine and a good supply of real nappies.

Real nappies come in numerous styles and designs, so take some time to think which type will be best for you and your baby. The next section of this guide will provide you with more information on the different types and styles available. If you need more help there are a range of websites offering advice. These are listed in Section 6, on page 8 of this guide.



## 3. Which nappies to choose?

**There are three types of real nappy: all-in-one nappies, flat nappies and shaped nappies.**

Flat nappies and shaped nappies require a separate waterproof wrap whereas with all in ones as the name implies, the waterproof wrap is an integral part of the nappy.

### All-in-one nappies

It has an integral waterproof outer as well and they fasten using Velcro or poppers, making them easy to use. All-in-one nappies sometimes have stuffable pockets which means that they have a pocket to insert an absorbent pad. This makes them easier to wash and dry. These nappies come in many different styles and designs.

**Cost: from around £7 each**

### Advantages

- Easiest to use
- Looks most like disposable

### Disadvantages

- Most expensive option
- Different sizes will be needed
- Takes longer to dry

*An All-In-One Nappy by Fuzzi Bunz*



## Flat nappies (Terries and Pre-folds)

Flat nappies include both terry nappies and pre-folds. Terry nappies consist of a plain cotton square whilst Pre-folds are usually made from woven cotton or flannelette which is stitched into three panels so that the centre panel is double layered. Both types need to be folded to fit baby. The terries can be fastened with a plastic grip designed to pull the towelling together. The most common brand of fastener is called a 'nappy nippa.' Both styles of nappy require a waterproof wrap.

Flat nappies are the cheapest of all the nappies and have the additional benefit of being fast drying. Most manufacturers suggest using a range of sizes as your baby grows but many parents find they only need one or two sizes. Pre-folds are used by most nappy launderers.

**Cost: around £2 per nappy**

### Advantages

- Cheapest option
- Very absorbent
- Quickest to dry
- Readily available in high street shops
- Only one size of nappy needed
- Can be folded in many ways to suit your baby

### Disadvantages

- Terries are great and cheap to use until about 3 months when a more secure nappy may be needed when your baby starts to move more
- Can look bulky



*Terry nappy*



*Pre-fold nappy with outer wrap and liner*

## Shaped nappies

These nappies are designed with fitted legs and waists. Most brands are made to fasten with poppers, Velcro or even ties.

Whilst shaped nappies usually have two sizes to fit from birth to potty (some have a third size for more versatility in the newborn stages or later on for toddlers), they may seem initially more expensive compared to the flat nappies; however they generally fit better at all stages and the largest size tends not to get outgrown. These are a particularly good buy if you are intending to use the same nappies for more than one child, as overall wear and tear will be less than an all-in-one.

**Cost: from around £5 per nappy**

### Advantages

- Easier to use than flat nappies
- Elasticated legs and waist mean they fit well
- Durable as cover is separate

### Disadvantages

- Slower to dry than terries
- More expensive than pre-folds
- Different sizes may be needed



*Shaped nappy by Tots Bots.*

## One size fits all or birth-to-potty nappies

One size fits all or birth-to-potty nappies are shaped nappies that are designed to fit all sizes of baby. These nappies are fastened using either poppers, Velcro or nappy nippas.

By re-arranging a system of poppers, or by simply folding the front over, the nappy can be adjusted to fit most babies from birth to potty. The downside of a one-sized nappy is that it can be bulky on a newborn and it can get outgrown at the other end of the scale.

**Cost: from around £7**



*Birth to Potty shaped nappy by Popolini*

### Advantages

- Easy to use
- Economical in the long-term
- Quick drying

### Disadvantages

- Can be bulky on newborns
- Initially more expensive

## Accessories:

### 1. Wraps

Unless you are using all-in-one nappies, you will also need to buy wraps and liners.

Modern wraps may be pull-on, popped or fastened with Velcro. The fabrics are waterproof and breathable, with soft edges where the wrap touches the delicate skin of the legs and waist. It is important that wraps fit in order to avoid leakage. You will generally need three sizes to fit as your baby grows. It is possible to find 'grow with your baby' wraps. However, these are more expensive in the long term.

Wraps come in numerous different colours and designs so you can have fun choosing. Each wrap lasts a number of changes (on average about three changes) so you don't need to buy as many. Usually you need three wraps in each size, three small, three medium and three large.

**Cost: from £4.50 each**



*Outer Wrap*

### 2. Liners

Using a liner makes life easier, especially after weaning. Choose from either washable or flushable liners.

#### Washable Liners

The best ones are made from fleece and can be sluiced into the toilet and washed. They cost about £2 each or you can cut your own from fleece material.

#### Flushable Liners

Made from paper, these come in perforated rolls. A roll of 100 costs around £2 and lasts around a month. It is essential to buy liners that say they are flushable and biodegradable. Some high street shops sell 'one way liners' which are not flushable and block sewage pipes. If the liner is only wet and not soiled, these liners can actually be washed with the nappies and reused two or three times.

### 3. Boosters

Some babies need extra absorbency; this may be provided by a booster liner – a pad of cotton. For a better fit, you may also place the booster between the nappy and the wrap rather than inside the nappy.

## 4. How many will you need?

<b>Nappies:</b>	
If washed alternate days, tumble dried	10
If washed alternate days, line dried	18
<b>Covers (unless using all-in-ones):</b>	At least 4
<b>Liners:</b>	
Washable liners:	At least 12
Flushable liners:	Approx 1 roll per month
<b>Booster Pads:</b>	Optional
<b>Also useful:</b>	
Wet-nappy bag – sealable bags to put wet nappies in when out	Optional
Nappy mesh bag – to avoid handling nappies as they go into wash	Optional
Long handled brush – To deal with leaks on wraps	Optional
Nappy bucket or bin with lid	1
Non-biological washing detergent	

## 5. Real nappies – the costs

The cost of using real nappies will very much depend on which nappies you decide to use and the quantity you want.

If you chose flat nappies (the cheapest option), you could buy all the nappies and accessories you need for around £100. Shaped nappies on the other hand are more likely to cost around £150. A number of retailers offer ‘birth-to-potty real nappy starter packs’. These include all the real nappies and accessories you will ever need. The average cost for a complete starter kit like this is around £200. However it is advisable to try all nappies before you make an investment in a nappy type that may not suit you or your baby. Some companies offer trials (see page 8 for a list of suppliers).

The initial costs of changing over to real nappies can be quite an investment but there is no need to buy them all at once. You could for instance, buy one nappy each week through pregnancy and then apply for Hertfordshire’s nappy cashback scheme subsidy of up to £50, once the child is born (see page 9 for details). This will make the initial investment less noticeable.

At around £8.50 per week, the cost of using a nappy laundering service is quite similar to using disposables, but you will be creating less waste.

## 6. Sew your own nappies

If you are on a budget, sewing your own nappies at home may be a good option if you have a sewing machine. They can be made in half an hour from old towels, t-shirts and fleece sweaters, and you can buy specialist waterproof fabric (called PUL) to create nappy wraps or all-in-one nappies. PUL is available online in a variety of prints and colours, along with white, which is usually the cheapest.

Nappies are generally easy to sew, and there are patterns available that are as easy to sew as a pillowcase and suitable even for those who have never used a machine. If you have a little bit of sewing experience, you can sew your own nappies that rival the pre-made cloth nappies available on the market. You can also adjust the fit for your baby’s chunky tummy or skinny legs to avoid leaks.

## 7. Where to buy real nappies

The following are just some of the companies that supply real nappies. There are many more available

by looking on the internet or by using the Nappy Finder at [www.goreal.org.uk](http://www.goreal.org.uk)

(Information correct at time of going to print.)

Mail order Company	Website address	Telephone number
The Baby Catalogue	<a href="http://www.thebabycatalogue.com">www.thebabycatalogue.com</a>	0844 826 4200
Bambino Mio	<a href="http://www.bambino.co.uk">www.bambino.co.uk</a>	01604 883777
Bottoms in Cotton	<a href="http://www.bottomsincotton.co.uk">www.bottomsincotton.co.uk</a>	07525 243838
Ella's House	<a href="http://www.ellashouse.co.uk">www.ellashouse.co.uk</a>	Web Only
Green Baby	<a href="http://www.greenbaby.co.uk">www.greenbaby.co.uk</a>	01772 331869
Greenfibres	<a href="http://www.greenfibres.com">www.greenfibres.com</a>	0845 330 3440
Little Green Earthlets	<a href="http://www.earthlets.co.uk">www.earthlets.co.uk</a>	0845 072 4462
Little Lamb	<a href="http://www.littlelamb.co.uk">www.littlelamb.co.uk</a>	Web Only
Lizzie's Real Nappies	<a href="http://www.lizziesrealnappies.co.uk">www.lizziesrealnappies.co.uk</a>	0808 120 1004
Lollipop	<a href="http://www.teamlollipop.co.uk">www.teamlollipop.co.uk</a>	01736 799512 / 01736 799513
Lucky Sprog	<a href="http://www.luckysprog.com">www.luckysprog.com</a>	01793 618484
Kitty Kins	<a href="http://www.kittykins.co.uk">www.kittykins.co.uk</a>	01986 784445
Modern Baby	<a href="http://www.modernbaby.co.uk">www.modernbaby.co.uk</a>	01992 589689
Nappies by Minki	<a href="http://www.nappiesbyminki.co.uk">www.nappiesbyminki.co.uk</a>	01851 870662
The Nappy Lady	<a href="http://www.thenappylady.co.uk">www.thenappylady.co.uk</a>	0845 6526532
Natural Collection	<a href="http://www.naturalcollection.com">www.naturalcollection.com</a>	0845 3677 001
Nature Babies	<a href="http://www.naturebabies.co.uk">www.naturebabies.co.uk</a>	01509 621879
Plush Pants	<a href="http://www.plushpants.co.uk">www.plushpants.co.uk</a>	01865 408040
Snazypants	<a href="http://www.snazypants.co.uk">www.snazypants.co.uk</a>	01369 830040
Stuffie Nappies	<a href="http://www.stuffienappies.co.uk">www.stuffienappies.co.uk</a>	Web only
Twinkle Twinkle	<a href="http://www.twinkleontheweb.co.uk">www.twinkleontheweb.co.uk</a>	0118 969 5550

Well known supermarkets and retailers now stock real nappy brands: Tesco, Sainsbury, Waitrose, Boots, John Lewis and Mothercare.

Disclaimer: The WasteAware Hertfordshire Partnership does not endorse any of the companies herein listed, nor is it responsible for any of their products.

## 8. Caring for real nappies and reducing their environmental impact

- Real nappies can be washed in your washing machine at 60°C with non-biological powder. There is no need to boil wash. Wraps can be washed at 40°C.
- Use half the amount of detergent as you would use with your normal clothes. Your nappies will still be as clean.
- Don't use fabric conditioners; these make the nappies less absorbent.
- You do not necessarily need to wash the nappies every day. Every two or three days is enough. They can be stored in a nappy bucket until there is a full wash load.
- Minimise tumble-drying. Nappy life is prolonged if you line dry them and it's better for our environment.
- Using A-rated appliances can reduce energy and water consumption.
- Flushable nappy liners should only be flushed when they are soiled. If they are only wet, they can be washed at least twice. Make sure the flushable liners you buy are biodegradable and flushable.
- Real nappies may be used for more than one child.

## 9. Sources of information about real nappies

Hertfordshire nappy cashback scheme	WasteAware helpline 0300 1234 051. Contact your local council to request a form or download from <a href="http://www.wasteaware.org.uk">www.wasteaware.org.uk</a>	Provides information on how to claim up to £50 cashback in Hertfordshire by choosing to use real nappies.
Go Real Nappy Helpline Go Real Nappy Email Go Real - The Real Nappy Information Service	0845 850 0606 <a href="mailto:advice@goreal.org.uk">advice@goreal.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.goreal.org.uk">www.goreal.org.uk</a>	Use the Nappy Finder facility on this website to find a local retailer, agent, nappy network, laundry or incentive.
Women's Environmental Network	P O Box 30626 London, E1 1TZ 020 7481 9004 <a href="mailto:nappies@wen.org.uk">nappies@wen.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@wen.org.uk">info@wen.org.uk</a>	Non-profit national organisation working to educate, inform and empower women and men who care about the environment. Provides lists of nappy suppliers, second hand nappies and nappy exchanges.

Disclaimer: The WasteAware Hertfordshire Partnership is not responsible for any of the services provided by the organisations herein listed (with the exception of the Hertfordshire nappy cash back scheme)

## 10. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**This list of FAQs has been compiled by a group of mothers who are using real nappies. All the answers are based on their own findings.**

### Benefits

#### What are the benefits?

- It is so much nicer putting soft cotton against your baby's lovely skin than paper disposables.
- Using real nappies reduces the amount of waste sent for disposal and also the amount of energy and non-renewable sources used to produce disposables. Only about 20 cotton nappies per baby need to be produced as opposed to about 4000 disposable ones. The cotton nappies can also be reused and then recycled.

### Costs

#### Are cotton nappies affordable?

- Yes! If you use a laundry service you get the nappies as part of your weekly fee. Everything else you will need to buy, for example, wraps. If you home wash, you will need to buy everything, including about 20 or so cotton nappies. But ultimately home washing is probably the cheapest way of using cotton nappies.
- Some boroughs offer cash incentives to get parents using cotton nappies. For example in Hertfordshire you get up to £50 (See Sources of information about real nappies on page 8), which you can put towards laundry service or home washing costs.

### Hygiene/safety

#### How do I store dirty nappies?

- Bins are provided if you use a nappy service or just buy a bin with a lid if you home wash.
- You could always try wiping a few drops of essential oil (perhaps tea tree) around the bin to reduce odour.
- Also don't rinse out the nappies before you put them in the bin (but do sluice if soiled.).

#### Are they hygienic/safe?

- We think so. Laundry services generally launder in accordance with NHS and PAS – Publicly Available Specification 106. If you are home washing, 60°C will give them a good clean.

#### How do I store dirty nappies when out and about?

- There are plastic-lined drawstring bags available from many of the companies listed on page 8, to make storing them when outside of the home easier.
- Use nappy sacks which are widely available from any retailer.

#### Do you need to use pins?

- No. If you decide you need to put the cotton nappy on snugly to prevent leakage then you can buy plastic "nappi nippas" which are great and safe.

### Leakage etc

#### Do they leak?

- No more than disposable nappies. Make sure the nappy is tucked inside the waterproof wrap.

#### Can I use them at night?

- Yes. As your baby grows older you may need to use boosters at night.

#### Can I use them on newborn babies?

- Yes. Real nappies are great for newborn babies. Always ask your advisor for advice on nappies to use on newborns.
- There are different kinds of liners available, so it is worth experimenting to see which one works best for your baby.
- The nappies can be folded in different ways to help keep the content in place!

#### Do you need to change more often?

- No. Change every two hours or more if necessary.

### Parental concerns

#### Do they cause nappy rash?

- Nappy rash is usually caused by not changing any kind of nappy frequently enough, teething, weaning or the baby being sick.

### Nurseries and childminders

#### Do/can nurseries and childminders use them?

- Yes they can. Make sure you show them and explain how to use the nappy system and hygienically store the nappies. This should ensure that they fully understand the system and can carry out the changes.

## Time

### Do they take longer to change?

- They can initially if you have been used to disposables. But once you get used to them it can be enjoyable to take time to change your baby's nappy unhurriedly!

### My partner worries that I will be taking on too much using cotton nappies, when I will already have a newborn to cope with!

- If you are worried about having too much to do then consider a laundry service, at least to start you off. They are very time efficient and using one will even mean you don't have to lug bulky disposables home from the supermarket.

## Using a laundry service

### Is a service cheap?

- Using a laundry service is about the same price as disposable brands such as Pampers and Huggies.
- A laundry service which costs £8.50 per week, for example, would be about £2.50 per week dearer than disposables, depending on how many changes. When pull-up disposables start to be used the costs are about equal. These nappies are delivered to your door however, so no more lugging around big packs of nappies or worrying about running out. Also less waste is created.

### I don't want to use someone else's nappies!

- Pre-fold nappies that are 100% cotton are sterilised at 90°C.
- They are generally laundered to the same standard as hospital/hotel towels and sheets. (The process is called thermal disinfection which means that the nappies are disinfected by the high temperatures.)

## Washing your own nappies

### How much does home washing cost?

- Home washing is the cheapest method! Once you have bought the basics it only means a few extra garments to add to your wash.
- Remember you do not have to wash the waterproof wrap every single wash. Only if it is soiled.

### How should I wash the nappies?

- Usually 60°C is fine, using ordinary washing liquid, preferably an eco friendly one
- Some people soak the nappies first just before washing – with a couple of drops of tea tree or lavender oil, or quite a lot of bicarbonate of soda.

### What do I do with my wraps and cotton nappies when I have finished with them?

- They can be sold or donated through a number of places.





**For further information please contact:**

WasteAware on 0300 1234 051  
or visit the website at [www.wasteaware.org.uk](http://www.wasteaware.org.uk)  
You can also contact your local council

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