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**Isn't it about  
time you changed  
your baby's nappies?**

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# Nappy Guide



Surrey Cloth Nappy Project  
Managed by the  
Surrey Authorities Waste Network



A washable nappy system consists mainly of two parts:

**Part one** *'the nappy'* - made from absorbent cotton

**Part two** *'the wrap'* - a waterproof cover made from breathable fabric to keep your baby's clothes dry

*These two parts can also be combined to make an all-in-one nappy system.*

Now all you have to do is decide which nappy type to choose.

**Should I choose a flat nappy or shaped nappy?**

**Should I choose an all-in-one or two part nappy system?**



## All-In-One Nappy System:

This nappy system has a shorter life expectancy due to the fact that the waterproof outer is exposed to the same washing temperature and number of washes as the nappy and may only last for one or two children. They are more expensive and take longer to dry than a two part nappy system unless you choose a pocket nappy system. However, they are the easiest to use and for a quick change they are the most similar to a disposable nappy.



## All-In-One Nappy:

A shaped and fitted nappy made up with layers of absorbent cotton and an outer layer of waterproof fabric to keep your baby's clothes dry. These are available with Velcro or popper fastening.



## Pocket Nappy:

This nappy has a waterproof fabric on the outside and an inner fleece lining. It also has a pocket opening at the back of the waist edge, into which a pad or folded flat nappy of your choice should be inserted. Once put together this nappy system works like an all-in-one nappy but separates for washing and quick drying. You will need the same number of pocket nappies as flat nappies to go inside.

## Two Part Nappy System:

This nappy system requires either a flat or shaped nappy and a separate waterproof wrap to keep your baby's clothes dry. They are available with Velcro or popper fastening in a variety of colours and designs to suit all tastes - whether you like plain or funky!



## Flat Nappy:

Choose between:

1. A 'prefold', which is a rectangle of several layers of cotton sewn together, which requires only a very simple fold.

2. A 'terry square', which is more versatile as it may be folded into a simple pad shape or traditionally folded and secured.

3. A 'muslin' which requires some folding that may take some practice and getting used to. These are most suitable for newborn babies offering a limited amount of absorbency.

The flat nappy is the most economical and quickest drying nappy system and will last for many babies.

## Shaped Nappy:

This nappy is good for containment. It is shaped and fitted around the baby. It fastens at the waist and legs to avoid any leaks. Shaped nappies are available either in one-size, which are designed to fit from birth to potty training and offer very good value for money, or they are available in different sizes to fit each stage of your baby's growth. The shaped nappy system is more expensive than the flat nappy system and takes longer to dry but some parents find them easier to use with no folding required and a high level of absorbency.



## What else do I need?

### Nappy Liners:

These play a crucial part in any nappy system. For an easy nappy change, they will catch solids, which can be flushed away, whilst allowing wetness to soak through to the absorbent nappy. These are available in sheets of flushable/biodegradable paper, washable silk (particularly good for babies suffering with eczema or sensitive skin conditions) or washable fleece, which provides a stay dry layer next to your baby's skin.



### Booster Pads:

These are a shaped pad made from layers of absorbent cotton or terry, which can be added to any nappy system to increase the level of absorbency as and when it is required. This may be required as your baby wets more, sleeps throughout the night or for longer periods of time.



### Trainer Pants:

These are extremely convenient to use when your child is learning to use the potty. They are waterproof, breathable pull up pants that have an absorbent inner layer, just enough to catch the odd accident.



### Swim Nappy:

These are essential in public swimming pools and a washable variety offers good value for money whilst containing any accidents.



## How do I wash, store and dry nappies and wraps?

Before using washable nappies for the first time they need to be washed 2-3 times to increase their level of absorbency, which will increase further with each wash. (There is no need to dry in between these washes if you prefer to do this in one day).

Ensure all Velcro tabs are fastened to avoid catching and snagging. Fluff & threads are attracted to velcro which then prohibits their fastening.

Check the individual washing temperature for your chosen nappy and wrap. Most nappies can be washed at 40°C or 60°C if needed, whilst some wraps require a 40°C wash only.

Use only half the manufacturers recommended dosage of non-biological detergent, eco-friendly detergent or eco-laundry ball. DO NOT use fabric conditioner as this reduces the absorbency of the nappy. Instead, you can add one tablespoon of clear white vinegar to ensure any residual detergent is removed. You can also add a couple of drops of essential oil such as lavender or tea tree, which have antibacterial and antifungal agents and give a nice smell to the washing.

To combine other washing with nappies, run the nappies through a rinse cycle first, add detergent, then at this stage add any other laundry suitable for the same temperature if required.

## Should I dry store or soak washable nappies?

Place the wet nappy and wrap into a bucket or large plastic box with a lid and store until ready to wash. This generally seems to be around every 2-3 days when you will have enough nappies for a full machine load.

### Dry Store:

This is the least messy method of storing but may shorten the life of your nappies unless they are rinsed under a tap before putting in the nappy bucket. A muslin, booster pad or old piece of towel with a few drops of essential oil can be placed inside the bucket to reduce any odour.

### Soaking Nappies:

This is a little fiddlier than dry storing but may help prevent stains from setting and prolong the life of your nappies. Using a nappy mesh inside your bucket will make removing the nappies easier as you can lift the mesh bag out of the water containing the nappies and place them inside the washing machine. Loosen the bag so that the nappies and wraps can move freely within the washing machine to ensure a thorough wash.

The water should be changed daily until washed and you can add one of the following to the water if you wish:

- 3-5 drops of Tea Tree Oil (has natural antibacterial & antifungal agents)
- 3-5 drops of Lavender Oil (similar to Tea Tree - not as strong - you may prefer the smell)
- 2-3 tablespoons of clear distilled white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon of Nappy Fresh\*

\*most other commercial nappy sanitisers and sodium bicarbonate are not recommended as they are usually biological and can ruin the elastic found in modern nappies.



## How do I get the nappies & wraps dry?

The most economical and environmentally friendly way to dry nappies and wraps is to hang them outside when possible. This will also help remove any stains or discoloration to nappies or wraps when hung in sunshine, which has natural bleaching properties.

Nappies can also be tumble dried. Pop a dry towel in with the nappies to reduce drying time or part-dry outside and finish in a tumble dryer to soften.

Wraps should not be tumble dried as this may affect their waterproof properties. They will dry very quickly in a warm environment such as an airing cupboard or close to (not on) a radiator.

Alternatively, nappies may be hung on a radiator but this may make them a little stiff. You may do the same for a wrap but place on top of a towel first so it is not in direct contact with the radiator.

Any stiffness in nappies can be softened by rubbing the fabric together.

## So what can you do?

You can either buy nappies to wash at home or use a nappy laundering service, which will deliver fresh, sterilised nappies to your door each week and take away the dirty ones.



## What else do I need to know?

### How many nappies & wraps do I need?

The number of nappies required largely depends on the age of your baby and the washing routine you establish for the nappies, which is generally every 2-3 days. A good guide would be the same amount as disposable nappies if you are already using these or a washable nappy for every 2-3 hours, plus a wrap for every 2nd or 3rd nappy change depending on the nappy system being used.

Wraps are more directly exposed to wetness if using a flat pad folded nappy so more may be needed than if a shaped nappy is being used. To help reduce the number of wraps needed, they can be washed daily with other washing ensuring any fastenings are secured.

### How do I manage when I am out?

Use a 'wet' nappy bag or other waterproof bag to store wet nappies when out and about. This makes life easier at the end of the day.

### What about nappy rash?

Whether you choose to use disposables or washable nappies, babies from time to time may have some nappy rash. This is not caused by the type of nappy used.

Ensure your baby's nappy is changed as soon as it is soiled and clean your baby's bottom thoroughly with water.

Remember to give your baby's bottom some 'nappy free time' when possible. This can be achieved by allowing your baby time to kick around on a baby mat or large towel or simply allowing your toddler time to play in the garden without a nappy.

Consult your health visitor or doctor if you become worried.



### What about leaks?

These should not occur if you are using a correct fitting nappy with enough absorbency and a wrap that fits snugly around the waist and legs, with no nappy exposed outside of the waterproof wrap. Try adding a booster pad or change the nappy more often if leaks are still occurring or alternatively try a different nappy type.

In the first few weeks, your baby's breast or bottle milk can be explosive and with all the best will in the world, may still escape a nappy. Replacing the paper liner with a fleece liner may help with absorption.

### Aren't washable nappies bulky?

They may appear to be initially but they do not get any bulkier no matter how wet they become. Otherwise try a nappy made from hemp fabric, which is extremely slim and super absorbent offering the best of both worlds!

### Which nappy is best suited to my baby?

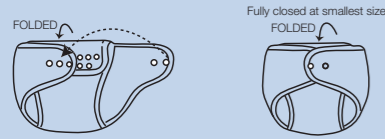
Remember all babies are different and what suits one baby may not suit another just as an item of clothing in the same size may fit two babies quite differently. If you would like further help and a demonstration where you can see and feel the nappies before making your decision you can request advice from a nappy advisor. Contact the Surrey Real Nappy Network for details of your nearest advisor or see the 'Where To Buy' page enclosed.

Washable nappies can be used some or all of the time so the benefits of both disposables and washables can be enjoyed harmoniously!

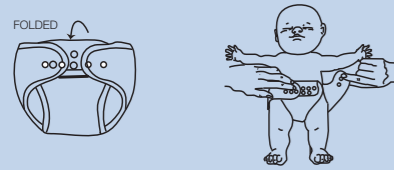
# Nappy folding instructions:

How to adjust the One Size Nappy

Smallest Size Setting



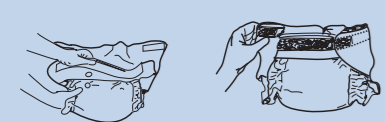
Medium Size Setting



Large Size Setting and Optional Snap-in Liner

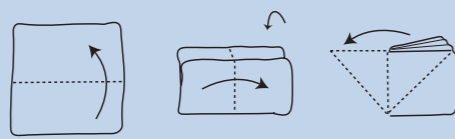


Adjust size to fit your baby by using the snaps (as shown)



Folding A Terry Nappy

Origami Fold



Take nappy and fold in half

And half again

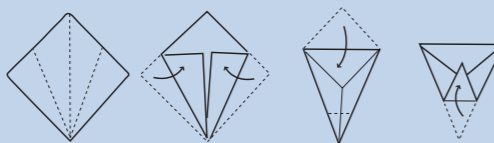
Drag the top right corner out to left to create a large triangle



Turn whole nappy over

Fold square piece over twice to form panel padded centre panel

Kite Fold

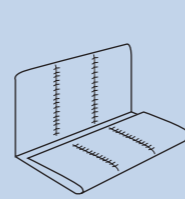


Take nappy and fold corners into centre lines

Fold top corner down

Fold bottom corner up

Folding a Prefold

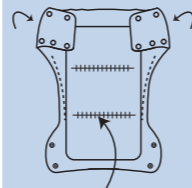
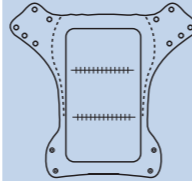


1. Lay the Prefold flat

2. Bring the top third down

3. Take the bottom of the nappy up so that it becomes a rectangle

4. Place inside the wrap with a flushable liner on top if desired and there you have it, a simple speedy nappy change



So now I am ready to try washable nappies but...

Where can I buy them from?

Enclosed is a list of UK nappy suppliers and manufacturers. Check individual listings for local nappy advisors who can talk you through the different options available and in some cases may be able to show you a wide variety enabling you to see before you buy.