

## All about Cloth Nappies (written by a man!)

### What's new?

When you say 'cloth nappies' most people instantly think of flat square terry towelling nappies that are attached with a safety pin. A lot has changed! Modern Cloth Nappies (MCN's) are very different - they don't leak, are easy to use and are also much more attractive than disposables.

### Types of Modern Cloth Nappies

A number of styles of nappies are available to suit your baby and your budget.

Fitted – Shaped to fit, and typically used with a cover. Either one size fits all or individually sized and are generally cheaper than all-in-one nappies. Covers come in a range of styles and can be reused during the day.

All-in-ones (AIO) and All-in-twos (AI2) – Similar to fitted nappies, but have the waterproof cover built in. Absorbent inners are either sewn in or snapped in.

Pocket Nappies – like an all-in-one, but the cover and liner are sewn to provide a pocket – into which a booster can be stuffed – to provide extra absorbency and quicker drying time. Pockets are great as most inserts are suitable to use with any pocket nappy. They can also have extra boosters stuffed into the pocket to provide you with extra absorbency and can often double as a night nappy.

### How do I use them?

Most nappies have either Velcro or snaps, and fitting them to your baby is as easy as fitting a disposable. Even I, the husband can do it with no problems, but I do prefer Velcro.

You normally expect to change a modern cloth nappy around every 3 hours, depending on your baby. Simply place the used nappy in a bucket (flush away any solid waste first) or if you are out and about, pop it into a [wet bag](#). (We stock those too)

### What else do I need?

You will typically need a nappy bucket to put used nappies in before they go in the wash. See the section on washing later for specific info on how to wash and look after your nappies.

Unless you prefer disposable wipes, some reusable cloth wipes are needed to wipe your baby's bottom when changing the nappy. You can either use wipes wash, water or a squirt of Sorbelene cream with these. Once used, the wipes can be washed with your nappies. Reusable wipes will also save you a fortune in disposable wipes during the time that your baby is in nappies (estimates of around \$800) and you can use them for older kids as face/hands wipes.

Lastly, you will need a wet/dry bag if you are out and about to put the used nappies in. These are very funky!

### How many do I need?

Most people have a set of about 21 nappies. It depends on your baby and how often you want to wash the nappies of course. Typically you would need to wash every 2-3 days.

### Cost vs. Disposables

A number of cost comparisons have been carried out. Australia is perfectly suited to modern cloth nappies due to our preference for cold machine washing and plentiful sun.

A complete set of basic cloth nappies will cost you around \$600, with premium cloth nappies costing as much as \$1000. This seems like a lot, but compare that to disposable nappies at around \$0.35 per nappy for 2.5 years – and you are likely to spend double that.

If you have a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> child your investment is then reused and the savings, compared to disposables, are massive.

Additionally, there is a huge market for good quality, second hand nappies.

Of course the advantage to the environment is also significant. Disposables take a long long time to biodegrade, up to 500 years in some cases, so the millions of tonnes that are added to landfill each year can be avoided if modern cloth nappies are used instead.

Read the articles in the more information section at the bottom of this page for more information on cost and some of the studies that have been carried out in various countries.

### **Washing and Care**

Probably the biggest objection we hear against using cloth is the amount of washing and soaking that needs to be done.

Firstly, you don't need to soak your nappies. Just flush away any solids and chuck them in a nappy bucket.

Every couple of days or so, throw them in the wash.

### **Detergent?**

It's up to you. We don't use any in our house, just a half cap of Canesten/Dettol wash in the rinse cycle. If you do decide to use detergent, use a non soap based product (ie, not Lux flakes or similar) at a rate of ¼ the recommended dosage. Any more may give your bubba bad nappy rash.

Drying – the sun is a fantastic way to remove any marks or stains that have made it through the wash. If you don't have a clothes line then they can be tumble dried on low without a problem.

### **Night nappies**

A night nappy is the same as a normal day use nappy but is typically boosted with much more absorbency to get your baby through the night. They come in fitted, AI1/AI2 or pocket styles. Most are made so the boosting can be tailored to your baby's needs. For fitted night nappies, either a PUL cover or wool cover is recommended to ensure that no moisture makes its way right through the nappy.

### **Liners**

To make disposal of solid waste easier, many people use a liner. This ensures that the solids just fall off for easy flushing away. Reusable liners made of fleece can be washed with the nappy. Just remember that the liner is a man-made fibre, and it will be against your baby's skin. Disposable, flushable, liners are a great alternative to those new to cloth, out and about, travelling, or just don't want the extra effort. We have always used liners for convenience, but it's your choice.

For fleece liners, you can simply buy a metre of fleece (or a pair of old track pants) and cut it up yourself, no sewing needed.

## Covers

Most modern covers are made from Polyurethane Laminate (PUL) and are breathable so your baby doesn't get sweaty, or wool, which has natural wicking properties. Fleece is another alternative, though may wick under compression. Again they are either fastened by Velcro or snaps.

## So where do I start?

It's important that you get cloth nappies that suit you and your baby. We wouldn't recommend going out and buying a whole set of nappies in one go. We would suggest trying a few different types and brands and working out which works best for you. Obviously it's important that the nappy fits your baby, so you will need some smaller ones to start with and then as your baby grows you will need some larger ones.

Alternatively, there are a few brands of one size fits all nappies that we can recommend. Depending on whether your baby is a girl or boy the nappy may be boosted in different areas.

## More information

If you have some questions, feel free to call us on 02 8060 5559 or email us at [orders@flowerchild.com.au](mailto:orders@flowerchild.com.au). If you are in Sydney, feel free to drop into our Collaroy store, where you can have a look at all the different brands and styles we have.

There are a number of websites with further info:

[Wikipedia Article on Cloth Nappies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Cloth_Nappies_(or_diapers)#Cloth) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern\\_Cloth\\_Nappies\\_\(or\\_diapers\)#Cloth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Cloth_Nappies_(or_diapers)#Cloth))

<http://www.modernclothnappies.org/>

<http://www.nappynetwork.org.au/>

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