

A Guide to the Types of Cloth Nappies and Accessories Available

This guide provides an explanation of the different types of cloth nappies and accessories available. Each section provided details on what they are, how to use them, whether a waterproof wrap is required, their pros and cons and an indication of cost.

Types of Cloth Nappies

Terry Nappies

Terry nappies are popular with many parents because of their cost-effectiveness and the ease with which they can be washed and dried. These square nappies are the cheapest and most adaptable around, costing just £1-2 each. They come in a universal size and can be folded in a range of styles to fit children/babies as they grow.

Traditionally, Terry nappies required pins to hold them in place. However, the use of T-shape rubber grips, known as Nappi Nippas, is a safer, modern alternative. As with prefold and two-piece nappies, Terry nappies require a separate waterproof cover to keep the child's clothes dry.

To see the various different ways in which you can fold a terry nappy, see our [nappy folding instructions](#) and our [video on YouTube](#)

Prefold Nappies

Prefold nappies are usually made of cotton, however, other fabrics such as bamboo are available. They require simple folding to create a pad shape and are combined with a separate waterproof cover, which offers protection and holds the prefold in place. Costing between £1.50 and £2.50 they are a cost-effective option and favoured by many parents as they are easy to wash and dry.

Our [video on YouTube](#) demonstrates how to use a pre-fold cloth nappy.

Two piece shaped nappies

Being a similar shape to disposables, the two piece cloth nappy is available in natural materials such as wool, hemp and cotton, as well as man made fibres such as microfibre, polycotton and polyester. With elasticated legs and waists and Velcro® or popper fastenings, they are one of the most practical nappies on the market. They require a separate waterproof cover, which makes them easier to dry than all in one nappies.

Available in small, medium and large sizes, you should expect to pay between £5 and £12 per nappy, depending on the style or fabric. This type of nappy is also available in a multifit size, which can adjust to fit children/babies as they grow. Our video clip on YouTube demonstrates [how to use a two-piece cloth nappy](#).

All in one nappies

These shaped nappies come in small, medium and large sizes and offer Velcro® or popper fastenings to ensure a snug, leak free fit. The waterproof cover is attached and they also have elasticated legs and waist, for comfort and ease of use.

Priced between £8-13, the all-in-one is one of the more expensive types of cloth nappy. However, many parents favour it for its convenience, even though it is slow to dry due to the attached waterproof cover. Our video clip on YouTube demonstrates [how to use an all-in-one cloth nappy](#).

Cloth nappies for premature babies

For tiny and premature babies, weighing between 2-7lbs, a few specially designed cloth nappies are available. Some shaped nappies can also be folded in order to fit small babies and you could consider using muslins, booster pads or microfibre cloths when baby is newly born. You will need a waterproof cover to prevent leaks.

Reusable trainer pants

Many children benefit from trainer pants, which are a useful aid to potty training. Reusable trainer pants are fully washable and available in day time and night time varieties. Pocket training pants can be stuffed with variety of nappy or booster pad depending upon the different absorbency needed. With fully-elasticated legs and waists they are both comfortable and easy to use.

Nappies for incontinence

Most people stop wearing nappies when they become potty trained, at around 2 and half years. However, those with bedwetting problems or disabilities may have to wear a nappy for a longer period.

Specially designed, washable nappies are available in a range of sizes and colours, with many products matching the style of regular underwear. For more information on this, see our [Large nappies fact sheet](#) or contact [Fledglings](#), a charity based in Saffron Walden which offers advice on toilet training and bed wetting.

Water Proof Covers and Accessories

Waterproof covers

With the exception of all in ones, nappies require a separate waterproof cover. This provides an outside layer to the nappy, which helps to prevent leaks and keep clothing dry. They are made of a variety of materials, including PVC, plastic, wool, fleece, cotton and PUL (polyurethane laminate). PUL covers are popular as they are both waterproof and extremely breathable. For children with sensitive skin, opt for cotton covers, which are less prone to causing irritation. For newborn babies, choose special tie-on covers.

Waterproof covers come in a range of styles and sizes, with some having a built in gusset designed to hold a prefold in place. These cost between £5 and £8 each. Others are completely stuffable and sometimes called 'pocket nappies' because a prefold, Terry nappy or booster pad can be inserted inside to resemble an all in one. Stuffable style waterproof covers cost between £9 and £12.

When fastening the waterproof cover, you should ensure that the entire nappy is tucked inside, in order to prevent leaks. To find out more you can watch our YouTube videos on how to fit a waterproof cover to a [shaped nappy](#), [a prefold nappy](#), [a terry nappy](#), or a [stuffable/pocket style nappy system](#).

Booster pads

Booster pads add extra absorbency to nappies and are usually used in situations where the nappy cannot be easily changed like a long car journey, or in periods of heavy wetting like at night time. Pads come in both natural and man-made fabrics and fit on top of the nappy and underneath the liner. The cost for booster pads is approximately £2 each.

Nappy liners

Liners are used to cover the inside of the nappy and to allow urine to pass through the nappy, keeping the child's bottom drier. They also catch poo, so it is easier to flush down the toilet.

Liners are either paper or washable. Paper liners can be both flushable and non-flushable and washable liners are commonly fleece or cotton. Washable liners, particularly fleece, are suited to children with runny poo, for example while breast feeding and pre-weaning, as this may stick better to fabric rather than paper and help to prevent leaks.

Paper nappy liners should cost around £4 for a roll of 200, while fleece ones are around £1 - £2 each.

For more information on cloth nappies contact 0845 603 7625 or email wastemanagement@essex.gov.uk