

By choosing to use cloth nappies instead of disposable nappies, you will be saving money, saving the environment and looking after your baby's health. Like all things worth doing, it may not be all smooth sailing, but this brochure is designed to help you deal with problems should they arise.

Getting started ...

The first thing to do is to make a commitment to yourself to use cloth nappies. If problems arise, disposables will often appear to be the "easy way out", but if you stick with your commitment, you will reap the rewards.



Make it as easy as possible for yourself. With a bit of planning and organisation, you can work out a system that suits you.

Prepare while you are pregnant

If someone offers to get you a practical gift, suggest a nappy-wash service for a month or two or three! It can help get you started while you recover from the birth. If you choose to continue with the service after that, the cost is comparable to using disposables.

(It is a good idea to organise Nappywash approx. 6 weeks before birth due date.)

Things that you need

- nappies (2 dozen at least)
 - plichers ('Weenees' are highly recommended)
 - pins or 'Snappy Nappy's' (for terry-towelling nappies)
- tip: running a pin through hair or wool makes it go through the nappy fabric more easily.*
- 2 large nappy buckets with sealable lids (to prevent smell and danger of baby falling in). *tip: plasterer's buckets are perfect.*
 - undercover clothes line in cooler, wetter climates
 - clothes horse (or two)

Other things to consider

- nappy liners (re-usable) are soft on baby's bottom and draw moisture away
- alternatives to disposable items such as nappy wipes and nappy sacks are wash cloths and reused plastic bags.
- 'Little Squirt' - water sprayer attachment to toilet

The Dirty Work

Hints and tips for cleaning nappies

There are many options for removing faeces from nappies. The important thing is that you are disposing of your child's waste responsibly - through the sewerage system - and not wrapping it up in plastic to sit in a landfill with potential problems of disease and leachate into our waterways.

1. Take soiled nappy in a bucket to the toilet. Hold corner of nappy tight and flush. 'Little Squirt' attachment to toilet provides a high pressure stream of water. Highly recommended.
2. Don rubber gloves and use an old knife or brush to scrape faeces off into a bucket. Empty bucket into toilet.
3. Separate wet and soiled nappies, soak separately.

Laundry Options

- Soak overnight in borax and add a few drops of Eucalyptus oil for a fresher smell. Wash in machine.
- Soak overnight with 3 tablespoons of bicarb of soda. Wash in machine and add one tablespoon of vinegar to deep rinse.
- Soak in bleach - use an oxygen based bleach such as Neon. Follow instructions on box. (The use of bleach can be avoided. Hot water and sun will keep nappies white without bleach.)
- It is an option to soak in plain water or water saved from a previous wash (non-nappy wash or rinse cycle).
- Cold water washing is an option.

For all recipes listed above - dry nappies in the sun if possible. You can also hang them on the clothes horse and sit them over a heating duct. Wrap a sheet around the clothes horse which will act as a mini-dryer - they will dry much quicker.

For nappy folds contact your maternal and child health centre

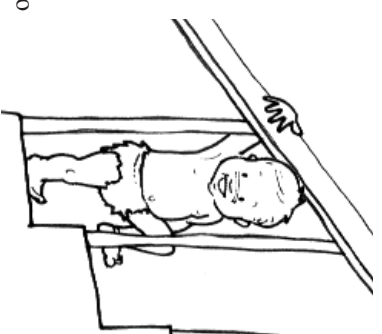
There are fitted nappy systems available eg. 'Zappy Nappy', Ph (07) 5442 8033 or try websites listed overleaf.

Other Helpful hints

- Put a load of washing on before you go to bed (cheaper to run after 11 pm). Hang out in the morning.
- Pre-folding nappies will help make each individual nappy change speedier. Fold as you are watching your favourite TV show.
- Set up your baby change station so you have everything easily within reach (but not baby's reach).

Keeping going ...

Some common issues & concerns with cloth nappies :



Nappy rash : A common problem affecting babies who wear cloth or disposable nappies. Fluffy plichers are a good alternative to plastic ones in summer (the fabric breathes). Pants-off time will also help clear up a rash (& babies love it!). The plastic backing on disposables makes a baby's skin 3-6 degrees warmer and creates an environment for bacteria to form. Cloth nappies are changed more frequently than disposables and the fabric breathes. Nappy liners can help.

Wetness at night: Try folding two nappies together to make a thicker nappy, or using one nappy folded as a 'pad' in a 'kite' or 'triangle' fold. A larger plicher may be needed.

Changing more frequently: Changing nappies more frequently is better for your baby's health.

Water conservation: The majority of household water wasted is in the garden. Start being water wise by using recycled water on the garden and installing water-efficient shower heads. You can save water from the rinse cycle for soaking nappies in. Water is required to manufacture disposable nappies.

Environmental impact of the cotton industry: Most people don't consider the impact of the cotton industry on the environment when buying clothes, towels and linen. Nappies are made from cotton, but they last a lot longer than most fashion items and can be passed on or used for a variety of purposes long after their use as nappies. Lobby for organic cotton or hemp nappies.

The odd one out? If you feel you may be wasting your time, remember the environmental, health and financial benefits of using cloth. You are doing the best thing for your baby, you are parenting with purpose! There is no need to explain yourself to anyone - unless they are genuinely interested.

3 great reasons to use cloth



Financial rewards

“Even if you use a clothes dryer sometimes, cloth nappies will save at least three thousand dollars over an average two and a half years of nappy wearing”.

(Coles Baby - Summer 2001 issue).



Healthier

Cloth nappies breathe and are better for your baby's health.

Disposable nappies are currently being tested to see if they could be responsible for causing infertility in some males in later life due to the heat generated within the plastic. Scientists are not yet recommending a stop to using disposables, unless the baby has a fever.

There is also the issue of the disposal of human waste, chemicals and plastics and the problem of leaching into our water table.



Safer for the environment

Each baby using disposables sends around half a tonne of waste material to garbage tips before he or she is toilet trained.

It is estimated that most disposable nappies will outlast the person who wore them.

Using cloth nappies can make

you feel good every time you put on a load of washing.

You are doing your bit to ensure your child's footprint

on the earth is small.

(They can only do it with your help!)



And then what?

If you encounter any problems, don't give up! Call WHEN for phone support. Ask your health professionals about how to use cloth nappies. Don't be fobbed off. Ask your parents - even grandparents! Visit the list of websites below.

Useful websites

(Libraries are great places to Internet browse)

www.cuddlybub.com.au (fitted nappies) excellent info

www.kiwigreen.com.au (muslin nappies)

www.bambino.co.uk (fitted nappies)

www.sydneynappywash.com.au (nappy folds)

www.eenee.com (Weenee nappies)

www.awakedry.com.au (Bedwetting)

www.natural-wisdom.com (Elimination communication -

'no nappy' method)

www.reahappy.com

www.natureschild.com.au (excellent)

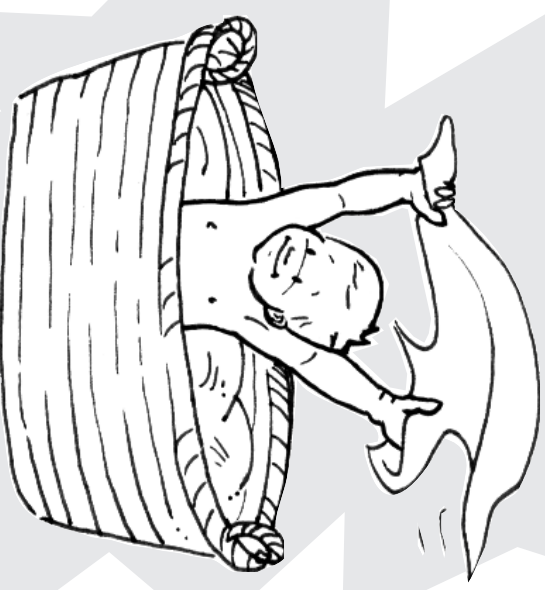
www.mothersdirect.com.au ('Little Squirt' supplier)

www.clothnappy.com.au (excellent)

www.radpads.com.au (Cloth menstrual pads)

www.wemoon.com.au (Cloth menstrual pads)

The art of cloth nappies



WHEN - Worldwide Home Environmentalists' Network
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WHEN Australia Inc. is a non-profit group whose purpose is to educate people and thus empower them to bring about positive change. WHEN originated in Canada in 1988 as a group of friends and neighbours sharing information about how to minimise household waste.

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