

Nappies are contributing to a major environmental and health disaster. Here's why:

- The first disposable hit the market in the USA in 1961. In 1971, highway clean up programs found that nappies were the largest source of litter on US highways.
- 1975. The Environmental Protection Authority in the USA warns that rainwater washing through rubbish tips carries live intestinal and vaccine viruses due to risk of open sewerage at tips from disposable nappies.
- Between 16 - 32% of waste at tips has been assessed as disposable nappy waste in the USA.
- 1988. Big disposable nappy companies **paid researchers** to investigate whether disposable nappies are environmentally safe and they concluded that they were — on what basis?
- 2000. A German study links plastic to male infertility, suggesting scrotal temperature is significantly higher on boys in disposable nappies. (For a copy of the preliminary study go to www.nature'schild.com.au)
- Disposable nappies are thought by many to be a health hazard due to the potentially dangerous chemicals used to create them. Sodium Polyacrylate, which makes disposable diapers so absorbent, often comes loose from the diaper, appearing as small crystals on your baby's skin. It has also been found in the urinary tract of babies and has caused severe nappy rash and bleeding in perineal and scrotal tissue in some babies. No independent studies have been conducted on the safety of this chemical; consequently, many parents simply do not want it touching their baby's skin and genital areas. In addition to Sodium Polyacrylate, organochlorins (chlorinated toxic chemicals) are also found in disposable diapers, albeit in trace amounts. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC), also found in disposables, has been known to cause cancer.
- One nappy takes 150 - 300 years to break down, depending on which study you read.
- Disposable nappies account for up to 30% of the non-biodegradable waste in landfills. In today's wasteful society, cloth diapering is one large way to reduce the amount of garbage we contribute to the landfills.
- Dumping raw sewerage is illegal yet we do it with disposable nappies. If you use a night disposable — please empty the contents in the toilet before you bin the nappy.
- Raw faeces in landfill means live vaccines and intestinal viruses floating out there, making their way back to our water tables. What goes around, comes around.
- To read more about landfill problems, check out these websites. Australian does not have such factual information available as yet, but we can learn from the UK and US experience. Check out www.realmappy.com or do your own searches on the web. We have provided just a snippet of information here, we encourage you to do your own research and base your conclusions on facts rather than urban myths.

Courtesy of *Mothering Magazine (USA)* and *Nature's Child (AUS)*

Financial comparisons of different nappies

With one disposable per night @40c each/ 3 years, add \$427 to these cloth nappy costs.

Most of these items can be re-used on a second child, additional covers and closures and detergents will be required at a cost of \$527 per child spread over 3 years. \$3.37/week

Nappy Wipes are an additional cost. If you purchase a commercial, disposable brand on a regular basis @ \$5 per fortnight, this adds up to an extra \$390. Re-usable *Nappy Wipes* that can be stored easily in your nappy bag and on your change table will cost approximately \$65 for the same period.

Full-time square cloth nappies for 3 years with some fitted nappies for outings using earth-friendly detergents and quality fitted nappy covers

10 Muslin or Flannelette for newborns	\$70
24 Terry Towelling Nappies for newborn to 3 yrs	\$60
24 cloth nappy liners (optional)	\$72
6 Snappy closures to hold nappy on or 24 nappy pins	\$30
12 nappy covers all sizes @ \$15 ea	\$180
earth-friendly detergents and nappy soak @ \$2.60/week	\$408
subtotal	\$820
Optional Extras	
6 fitted-cloth nappies & liners for outings	
\$113.70	
50 biodegradable nappy liners per fortnight	\$538
total	\$1472

Most of these items can be re-used on a second child, additional covers and closures and detergents will be required at a cost of \$618 per child. This cost is spread over 3 years. \$3.96/week

Full-time disposable nappy system

Financial cost (Prices vary depending on store purchased from and brand used.)

0 - 4yrs

Newborn 50 per week — 50 Nappies @ 40c each = \$20/week = \$1040/year

3 months + 40 per week — 40 Nappies @ 50c each = \$20/week

50 biodegradable liners — 1pkt/ fortnight @6.95 for 3yrs \$542 (optional but strongly recommended for health and safety)

1 year toddler night nappies @ 65c each = \$232

Total cost for full-time disposables with 1 year of toddler night nappies

and biodegradable nappy liners = \$3894

Total cost for full-time disposables for two children would be a total of \$7,788

Full-time one-size fits all fitted-cloth cloth nappies

24 Fitted Cloth nappies, liners and covers	\$499
50 biodegradable nappy liners per fortnight	\$538
optional earth-friendly detergents and nappy soak \$2.60/week	\$408
total without liners	\$907
total with liners	\$1445

Full-time cloth nappies on the cheap

24 nappies @ \$30 pkt	\$60
12 - 24 cloth nappy liners @ \$3 each	\$72
18 pull-on nappy covers @ 4.95 ea.	\$89
6 Snappy closures to hold nappy on or 24 nappy pins	\$30
earth-friendly detergents and nappy soak or bi-carb, vinegar and essential oils. \$2.60/week	\$408
Subtotal	\$659

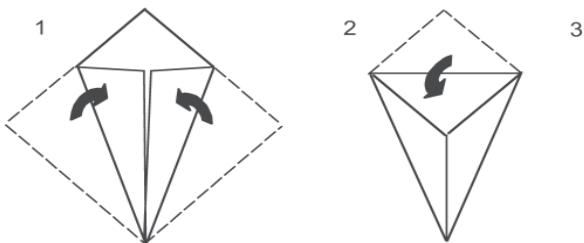
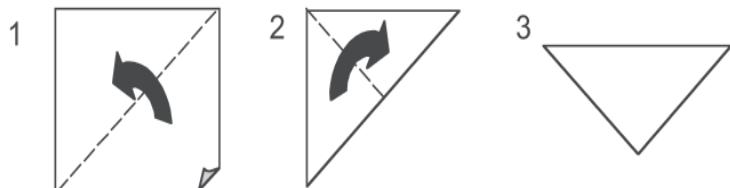
These costs are based on research at the local supermarket in Australia in June 2003. Total objectivity is difficult due to the price difference in branding.

Some nappy folds

All pins should run from side to side; remember to tuck the nappy up under the baby's thigh.
This eliminates leg restriction and leakage.

TRIANGLE

Fold nappy in half to make a triangle.
Fold again to make a smaller triangle.
Only one fastener required. Best for a small
baby. As baby grows, fold only once.

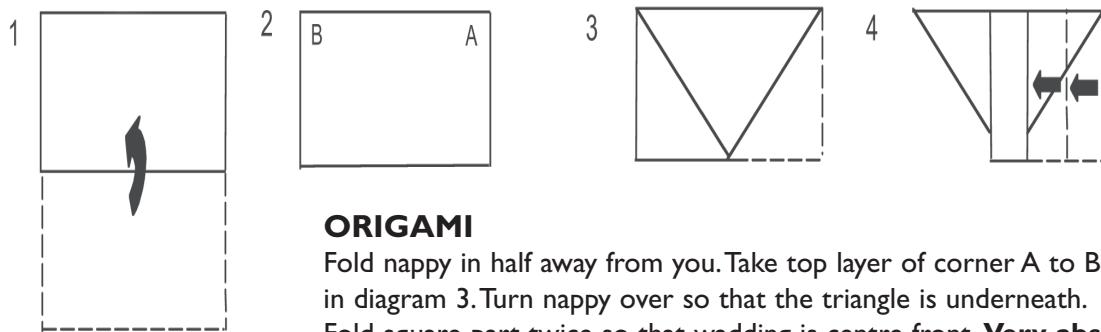


KITE

Fold side flaps to the centre.
Fold top down.
Fold bottom corner up.
Two fasteners will be needed.
Better for older babies.

TRIANGLE VARIATION

Fold nappy in half. Fold top edge down
(amount folded down will depend on
baby's size.) One pin in the front will
suffice. Good for smaller babies.

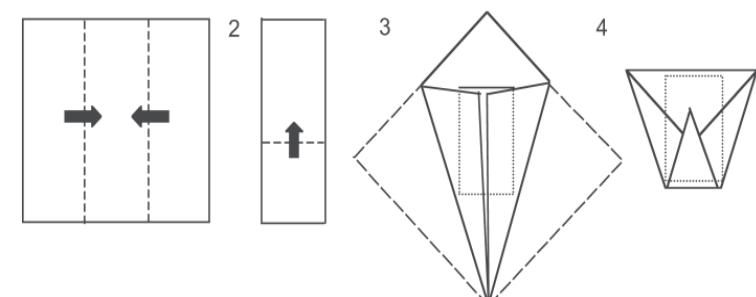


ORIGAMI

Fold nappy in half away from you. Take top layer of corner A to B, making a triangle as in diagram 3. Turn nappy over so that the triangle is underneath.
Fold square part twice so that wadding is centre front. **Very absorbent**

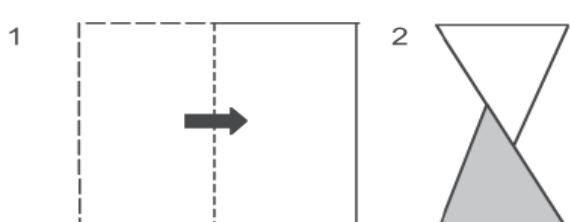
NITEKITE

Using 2 nappies, fold the 1st as per
diagrams 1 & 2.
Then place it on the other nappy and
fold the kite fold around it. Two fasteners
required. Very good for overnight without
the bulk to fasten.



TWIST

Fold the nappy in half as per diagram 1. Take the bottom left corner in your right hand & the bottom right corner in your left hand & uncross your arms.
Not meant to hold anything substantial – just to keep the carpet dry while allowing airflow.





Washing Tips

spray stain remover on diaper, and throw it into bucket. Keep lid closed. When ready to wash, put nappies in machine with a half cup of baking soda or your favourite earth-friendly detergent and pre-soak in cold water for about up to an hour. Wash with detergent on longest cycle; HOT/COLD. Put vinegar in fabric softener dispenser or rinse cycle if you feel it is necessary. Hang in sun to dry.

Washing nappy covers:

Covers can be washed with your nappies as above or you can prolong their life by washing them separately in a smaller bucket. If you soak them for a couple of hours, they are easy to hand wash when you are ready. If using machine wash, use a WARM/GENTLE cycle. Always consult washing instructions on your covers and decide which will work best for you. Covers should not go in the dryer; after washing, remove from washer and hang to dry.

Storing nappies

Wet nappies and rinsed soiled ones can be placed in a dry lidded bucket while waiting to be washed. Alternatively use one of the soaking solutions below.

- Fill your nappy bucket (approximately 9 litres) 1/2 - 3/4 full of water. If desired add 2-3 tbs white distilled vinegar. OR
- Add 1 tbs sodium bicarbonate OR
- Add 5 drops tea tree oil — readily available from health food shops, supermarkets or chemists. OR
- Add 1 tbs sanitising powder — from chemists or health food shops for an environmental, nappy and baby friendly alternative. Mix to dissolve, then add nappies throughout the day. Change the solution daily.

Some of these soaking and washing methods may not be suitable for some nappies — if in doubt consult your retailer.

Tips

- A small plastic bin (about 20 litres) with secure lid may be more convenient than a conventional nappy bucket, just double the solution. Biological detergents as well as perfumes, optical whiteners and other ingredients in ordinary washing detergents may cause skin irritation so these are best avoided. Adding 1/2 - 3/4 cup of vinegar in the last rinse cycle will keep nappies soft. BEWARE: commercial fabric conditioner will reduce the absorbency of nappies. If you would like your nappies to be softer, give them a flick before hanging them on the line, this helps fluff the fabric. If your nappy still seems a bit rough, try reducing the amount of detergent you use.
- If your child has allergies. Soak nappies in hot water with a TBLSB Borax, then wash in LUX and add vinegar (1/4 cp) to rinse cycle. Air everything out so it loses its new smell, this helps avoid reactions.
- A hot wash cycle at 60°C will adequately cleanse nappies and prolong the life of the fabric.
- Sunshine will deodorise, sanitise and naturally bleach nappies OR line dry indoors. The sun will bleach out any minor stains left after washing. Most nappies can be tumble dried.

Wet method:

Fill your nappy pail about a quarter full with cold water; add a half cup of baking soda and vinegar, or environmentally friendly pre-wash soak. If you are using a wet pail, make sure you keep the lid closed and lock the laundry if you have toddlers who like to explore! After shaking off any excess poo into the toilet, simply toss nappies into the pail. When the bucket is full, toss the entire contents of the pail into the washing machine. Run nappies through a spin cycle to get rid of dirty water, then wash on longest cycle HOT/COLD with your favourite earth-friendly detergent or half cup of baking soda. Use vinegar in your fabric softener dispenser, or add during the rinse cycle. Sun to dry. Rinse out your nappy bucket with hot water and optionally with tea tree or lavender which is a natural disinfectant.

Dry method:

This may be preferable if you have an inquisitive toddler in the house. Also great if you are the one doing the washing and may find a wet bucket too heavy to lift into the machine.

Sprinkle some baking soda in your nappy bucket. As an option add a few drops of lavender or tea tree as well. If you are using a disposable liner, throw soiled biodegradable liner in toilet and toss wet nappy into the bucket. If the nappy is soiled, scrape the poop into toilet, run cold water over nappy,