

Low waste nappies and wipes

Disposable Vs Reusable - Why make the switch?

In Hobart alone, every year approximately 466 tonnes - the equivalent of 100 full garbage trucks - of disposable nappies end up in McRobies Gully landfill. Multiply that across Tasmania and there are millions of disposable nappies being sent to landfill every year, each nappy taking hundreds of years to break down while producing methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Disposable nappies are the 4th most prevalent material after food waste, plastic packaging and textiles collected as waste from Hobart homes and make up 5% of all residential waste collected.*

Modern, reusable cloth nappies and wipes provide alternatives that are kinder on the planet and your hip pocket.

What are Modern Cloth Nappies (MCNs)?

Modern cloth nappies (MCNs) are washable and reusable fabric nappies that are fitted, shaped (just like disposables), and come in a variety of colours, styles and designs.

Reusable nappies are highly absorbent and typically made from cotton, microfibre, hemp or bamboo. Some have removable absorbent inserts either attached with snaps or in a pocket, plus a waterproof outer cover. Reusable swim nappies are also available.

MCNs usually fasten using press studs or Velcro so, unlike the old days, there is no need for tricky folds or safety pins. Some MCNs are sized, some are unsized with multiple fasteners to use as a baby grows.

There are many options available. It may help to borrow or buy a couple second hand to experiment with what combination works best for you.



* City of Hobart website

Families do not need to commit to full time cloth nappies to make a difference; swapping just 1 nappy per day can divert around 1000 disposable nappies from landfill in the child's lifetime

What about the cost?

The average child requires 6000 disposable nappies from birth to toilet training compared to 24 cloth.

While the initial outlay for cloth is more expensive than disposables, conservative estimates place cloth as \$1300 - \$2000 cheaper than disposables per child. The savings are even higher if cloth nappies are reused with subsequent children, the family purchases second-hand, or if more traditional terry towelling folded nappies are used instead of MCNs.

More information on the value of cloth versus disposable nappies, including a guide to using cloth nappies on a budget, can be found on the Clean Cloth Nappies website at: <https://cleanclothnappies.com>



Are compostable disposables an option?

Certified compostable disposable nappies are a lower waste alternative to regular disposable nappies but can only be composted at select industrial composting facilities. Currently the City of Hobart and Glenorchy City are the only municipal areas in Tasmania that accept compostable nappies in the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside bin service. Please note that biodegradable nappies are **not** accepted and only compostable nappies certified to one of the following standards are allowed: AS 5810, AS 4736, ASTM D6400, or EN13432.

Compostable nappies used in other areas of Tasmania must be disposed of in the garbage bin.

Over time, as more FOGO services are introduced in Tasmania and industrial composting facilities are enhanced, it is likely that more municipal areas will be able to accept certified compostable nappies in kerbside organics waste bins.



Low waste options for wipes

It's possible to buy cloth wipes or flannels as an alternative to single-use, disposable wet wipes. Another lower-waste option is to make your own by cutting and hemming old cotton clothes (flannelette sheets or pyjamas work well, as do old towels).

When using these away from home, carry a small refillable water bottle to wet them before use. Reusable cloth wipes can be washed with a load of nappies.



Low waste options for breast (nursing) pads

Washable reusable breast pads are a low waste way to keep clothing and bedding dry during the natural breastfeeding process of milk leakage. You can choose to make your own or purchase a set of washable breast pads; which are usually made from absorbent materials such as bamboo and cotton and backed with a waterproof layer.

Reusable pads are as slim as the disposable versions and can either be hand-washed for quick re-use or added to a machine load of washing.

Helpful information and resources

There are many helpful websites and social media groups available where you can ask questions, learn from other's experiences, and compare options. We've collated a few sites to get you started:

<https://cleanclothnappies.com> (website and Facebook group)

<https://www.australiannappyassociation.org.au/>

<https://www.switchyourthinking.com/ways-to-switch/modern-cloth-nappies/>

<https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/recyclopaedia/factsheets/nappies-factsheet>

In addition to online resources, Tiny Footprints in Hobart runs weekly workshops that step you through everything you need to get started; from the different types of nappies available, to washing and how to use them in day-to-day life.

Bookings are required, you can find out more here:

<https://tinyfootprints.com.au/pages/workshops>



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