

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR BABY



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It can be easy to get confused about what you really need for your baby. You can always ask your midwife or health visitor for advice on what to buy, and you may be given a list of essentials at your antenatal classes or by your maternity service. There are some essentials that every new mother needs, as well as extras that you might want to think about. You may be able to borrow some items, and then pass them on later to another mother or keep them for a second child.

NAPPIES

Disposable nappies

Disposable nappies are convenient to use and are available from supermarkets and other retail outlets.

Cloth nappies

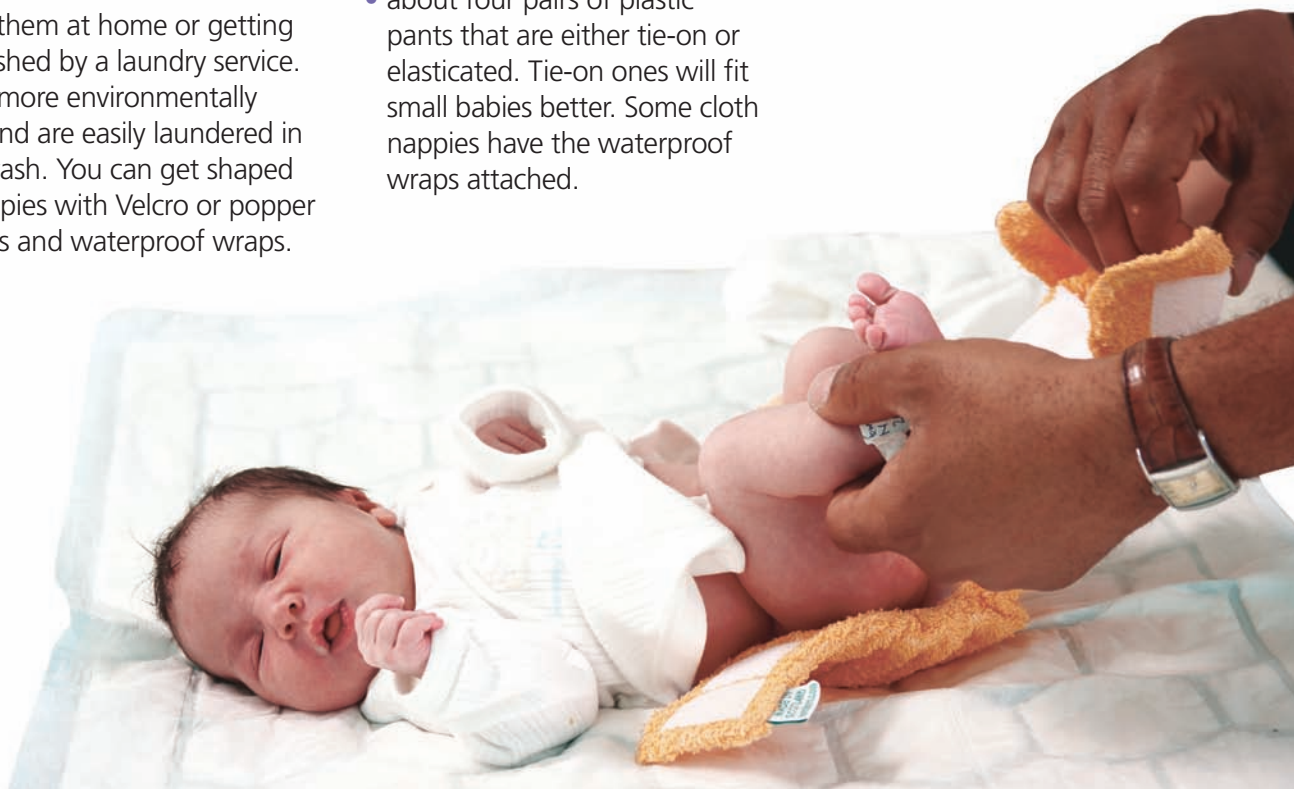
Washable cloth nappies are cheaper than disposable nappies, even when you take into account the cost of washing them at home or getting them washed by a laundry service. They are more environmentally friendly and are easily laundered in a 60°C wash. You can get shaped cloth nappies with Velcro or popper fastenings and waterproof wraps.

For cloth nappies, you will need:

- nappy pins for nappies without Velcro or fasteners
- nappy liners – either disposable or cloth, which you can wash and use again
- a bucket with a lid and nappy sterilising powder or liquid for sterilising nappies, and
- about four pairs of plastic pants that are either tie-on or elasticated. Tie-on ones will fit small babies better. Some cloth nappies have the waterproof wraps attached.

More information

For information about choosing and using cloth nappies, visit www.wen.org.uk, or visit www.goreal.org.uk to find local suppliers.



Nappy services

Nappy laundry services deliver freshly laundered nappies to your home and take away the soiled ones to wash each week. They supply everything you need – wraps, liners and storage bins.

Nappy changing



To change nappies, you will need:

- cotton wool. Always choose white. Rolls are usually cheaper than balls
- a changing mat
- baby lotion or wipes
- baby barrier cream to help prevent nappy rash, and
- a bag to carry all the nappy-changing equipment when you go out. A carrier bag will do but you can get special bags that include a changing mat.



BATHING

It is a personal choice how frequently you bathe your baby; a wash will often be enough to keep your baby clean and ensure they are comfortable. A warm bath may help your baby to sleep.

You will need:

- a baby bath or any large, clean bowl, such as a sink, as long as it's not metal.

Remember to wrap a towel round the taps for safety

- two towels, the softer the better. Keep them only for your baby's use. There is no need for special baby towels, unless you want them
- unperfumed soap – although washing your baby with just water is fine.

See page 144 for how to bathe your baby.

whose turn?

Safety

The safest place to change a nappy is on a mat on the floor. If you use a higher surface, keep your hand on your baby at all times to stop them rolling off.

See page 144 for how to change your baby's nappy.



SLEEPING

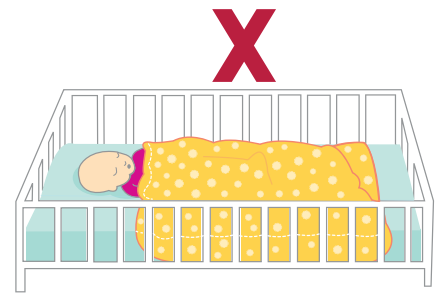
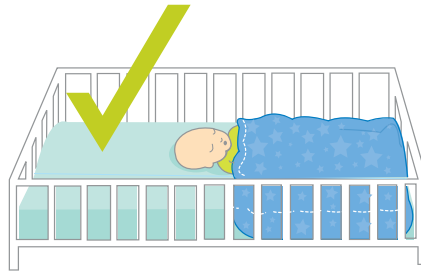
For the first few months, you will need a crib, a carry cot or a Moses basket (a light, portable bassinet). Your baby needs somewhere to sleep that is safe and warm and not too far away from you. If you are borrowing a crib or cot, or if you have one that has been used by another of your children, you will need a new mattress. See the section on reducing cot death on the right.



You will also need:

- a firm mattress that fits the cot snugly without leaving spaces round the edges so that your baby cannot trap their head and suffocate
- sheets to cover the mattress. You need at least four because they need to be changed often. Fitted sheets make life easy but they are quite expensive. You could use pieces of old sheet
- light blankets for warmth.

Pillows and duvets are not safe for babies less than a year old because of the risk of suffocation. Duvets can also make the baby too hot. Baby nests and quilted sleeping bags are not suitable for your baby to sleep in when you are not there because of the danger of suffocation.



The baby on the left is sleeping in the **'feet to foot' position** (also see page 140). This means that the baby's feet are right at the end of the cot to prevent the baby wriggling under the covers and overheating.

Cot safety

Your baby will spend many hours alone in a cot, so make sure it's safe.

- The mattress must fit snugly with no space for your baby's head to get stuck.
- The bars must be smooth and securely fixed, and the distance between each bar should be not less than 1 inch (25mm) and not more than 2 ½ inches (60mm) so that your baby's head cannot become trapped.
- The cot should be sturdy.
- The moving parts should work smoothly so that fingers or clothing cannot get trapped.
- Cot bumpers are not recommended as babies can overheat or become entangled in the fastenings.
- Never leave anything with ties – for example, bibs or clothes – in the cot in case they get caught around your baby's neck.
- If you are buying a new cot, look for the British Standard mark BS 1753.

Reducing the risk of cot death

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSiD) has developed important key messages for parents to help to reduce the risk of cot death.

- Place your baby on their back to sleep, in a cot in a room with you.
- Do not smoke in pregnancy or let anyone smoke in the same room as your baby.
- Do not share a bed with your baby if you have been drinking alcohol, if you take drugs or if you are a smoker.
- Never sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair.
- Do not let your baby get too hot – keep your baby's head uncovered – and place your baby in the 'feet to foot' position.





OUT AND ABOUT

Spend some time looking at what is available for getting around with your baby. Think about what will suit you best. You could always ask other mothers what they have found useful.

Baby carriers (also called slings) carry your baby in front of you. Most babies like being carried like this because they are close to you and warm. The back part of the carrier must be high enough to support your baby's head. Check that the buckles and straps that attach the carrier to you are secure. Older babies who can hold up their heads and whose backs are stronger (at about four months) can be carried in backpacks.

Pushchairs are only suitable for young babies if they have fully reclining seats that let your baby lie flat. Wait until your baby can sit up before using any other type of pushchair. You should also consider the weight of the pushchair if you use public transport as you might have to lift it onto trains or buses.

Prams give your baby a lot of space to sit and lie comfortably, although they take up a lot of space and are hard to use on public transport.

If you have a car, look for a pram that can be dismantled easily. Buy a pram harness at the same time, as you will soon need it.

Carrycot on wheels. Your baby can sleep in the carrycot for the first few months and the cot can be attached to the frame to go out. It can also be taken in a car with appropriate restraints.

Three-in-one. This is a carrycot and transporter (set of wheels) that can be converted into a pushchair when your baby outgrows the carrycot.

Shopping trays that fit under the pushchair or pram can be very useful when you are out.



Checks

Before buying a pushchair or pram, check that:

- the brakes are in good working order
- the handles are at the right height for pushing, and
- the frame is strong enough.

IN THE CAR

If you have a car, you must have a car seat. This is also called a safety restraint. Your baby must always go in their seat, including when you bring them home from the hospital. It's very dangerous – and illegal – to carry your baby in your arms.

The best way for your baby to travel is in a rear-facing infant car seat, on either the front or back seat. This is held in place by the adult safety belt.



If you have a car with air bags in the front, your baby should not travel in the front seat, even if they are facing backwards, because of the danger of suffocation if the bag inflates.

To keep your baby as safe as possible:

- Make sure the car seat is fitted correctly.
- Do not place a rear-facing infant car seat in the front passenger seat if your car is fitted with an air bag.



- Don't buy a second-hand car seat as it may have been damaged in an accident.
- Look for United Nations ECE Regulation number R44.03, or a later version of this standard, when you buy a car seat. This is the standard for new seats. However, if you have car seats that conform to a British Standard or to an earlier version of R44, you can continue to use them.

FEEDING

If you are going to breastfeed, you will probably want:

- nursing bras that open at the front and have adjustable straps. Cotton is best because it allows air to circulate. If you try on bras at about 36–38 weeks, they should fit when you need them

- breast pads. You put these into your bra to prevent milk from leaking onto your clothes.

If you are going to formula feed, you will need:

- six bottles with teats and caps
- sterilising equipment
- a bottle brush
- infant formula milk. Avoid buying this too far in advance, as instant formula milk has a 'use by date' printed on the package.

See Chapter 9 for how to feed your baby.

CLOTHES

Babies grow very quickly. All you need for the first few weeks are enough clothes to make sure that your baby will be warm and clean. You will probably need:

- six stretch suits for both day and night or four stretch suits and two nighties for the night. Use socks or booties with the nightie if it's cold
- two cardigans. They should be wool or cotton rather than nylon, and light rather than heavy. Several light layers of clothing are best for keeping your baby warm
- four vests

- a shawl or blanket to wrap your baby in
- a wool or cotton hat, mittens and socks or booties for going out if the weather is cold. It's better to choose close-knitted patterns for safety
- a sun hat for going out if the weather is hot or the sun is bright.



Washing baby clothes

If you use a washing machine, don't use washing powders with enzymes (bio powders) or fabric conditioner, as they may irritate your baby's skin. Always rinse clothes very thoroughly.

for tiny toes

