



*Kela's maternity packages have been highly popular for decades.*

**In the 2009 version of the maternity package distributed to expecting parents by Kela –The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, more products have been designed with ecological considerations in mind.**

For the third year running, the maternity packages include a set of reusable cloth nappies. The number of these has been increased, and some of the babywear is made from natural materials such as bamboo or from recyclables.

According to Elise Kivimäki of Kela, this change is intended to encourage parents to try out reusable nappies. “Free disposable nappies have been left out because they are available at maternity hospitals and other places, and parents may wish to buy them themselves,” she says.

When it comes to greater eco-friendliness, the winter overalls are a good example. The exterior is 63 per cent recycled material and 37 per cent ordinary polyester. The package also includes

socks and mittens made from bamboo.

## **Practical and popular**

The basic selection of products in the maternity package is much the same as in last year's version. The package contains items such as a snowsuit, caps, booties, mittens, a duvet cover, a sleeping bag, sets of cloth nappies, a mattress, a hairbrush, a toy, a picture book and condoms. New to the maternity package is a knitted overall made from a wool blend, which replaces the padded overall.

"Because of generally positive feedback, no major changes have been made," Kivimäki says. "Our customers have been happy with the neutral colours used in the products, so the range of colours is much the same as last year," she notes. According to Kivimäki, the reusable nappies have also generated a lot of positive feedback from their proponents.

The maternity package means a lot to Finns and has remained consistently popular for decades. Last year Kela distributed 42,400 packages. About 95 per cent of first-time mothers chose the package over the alternative, a cash grant of 140 euros.

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