

# Toilet roll

## NEED TO KNOW

Ordinary rolls – known as premium papers in the business – make up well over half of all sales. But there are increasingly popular alternatives.

### SUPER PREMIUM

These are often stronger, softer and more absorbent than premium rolls.

They're typically 5p or so more expensive per roll. And because the sheets are thicker, there are fewer per roll. That said, the price difference isn't massive – perhaps £8 a year for the typical family.

Another issue is that they're more likely to block your drains. In fact, British Gas has reported a sharp rise in call-outs to unblock toilets, citing luxury toilet roll as the possible culprit.

Our tests support the idea that luxury toilet roll takes a bit longer to disintegrate. Generally, there aren't big differences between papers. However, Andrex's Enriched With Aloe Vera was still in large clumps after flushing. (See 'Using the table' for details of our testing.)

We also found that Kandoo, a moist toilet paper aimed at children, didn't disintegrate at all.

### RECYCLED

It takes 50 per cent less energy to make toilet roll from recycled paper than from newly felled trees.

The catch is that recycled paper has shorter wood fibres than virgin paper, which makes it less soft. And it tends to take a while to disintegrate.

### BEST BUYS

Our Best Buys stand out from the other rolls on test because they're good all-rounders: strong without sacrificing softness, absorbent without compromising on strength, and so on.

We found the best rolls by testing absorbency, strength and degradability in a laboratory. We took hundreds of sheets, measured and weighed them, stretched them, and flushed them down the drain. Then, to rate softness, we asked 48 people to try the papers in the sanctuary of their own bathrooms.

### PREMIUM

**Andrex Puppies On A Roll (1)** and regular **Andrex (3)** are both pleasant to use. The former is slightly textured and has the Andrex puppy printed all over it. (And it has to be said that its looks rather divided the sentiments of our testers.)

The **Charmin (2)** is the most absorbent premium Best Buy, and testers liked its 'velvety surface'. It is one of the less degradable papers but not problematically so.

More degradable, and at a similar price per roll, is **Velvet Double (4)**. Its all-round performance was summed up well by one tester: 'It's practical. It does the job!'

The paper from **Waitrose (5)** is the only supermarket own-brand premium paper to win Best Buy status. Its understated quality edges it ahead of the competition. By contrast, the **Somerfield (7)** roll lacked absorbency, while **Morrisons Even Softer (9)** wasn't very soft – one tester even described it as 'a bit scratchy'. Ouch.

### SUPER PREMIUM

**Andrex Quilts (11)** is particularly strong, absorbent



and soft. It's the nicest paper to use by some way.

It is rather thick, though; testers compared it to kitchen roll and even wallpaper. The result is fewer sheets per roll – there are about 160 sheets in a roll, compared with 240 for the second premium Andrex (3), for example. That pushes up the price per sheet on an already expensive product.

It's also, along with the Charmin (2), one of the least degradable Best Buys.

The **Velvet Quilted (12)** breaks down more quickly. It's 5p a roll cheaper than the Andrex Quilts, and just as soft, but not as absorbent or strong.

### RECYCLED

Our final Best Buy is the recycled **Nouvelle (17)**. It's more pleasant to use than other recycled papers, which are among the roughest on test.

It's not as strong or absorbent as the other Best Buys, but it's a great choice for the ecologically minded. Not only is it softer and more absorbent, it also degrades more quickly than the other recycled rolls.

### SCORE

**Ignores price and is based on:**

Strength and absorbency	60%
Softness	20%
Degradability	20%



## USING THE TABLE

We tested popular brands of toilet paper.

## Specification

**Price per roll** Based on buying a pack of four rolls or the nearest equivalent. **Price per sheet** Calculated from the average number of sheets per roll.

## Performance

**Strength** Takes into account the wet and dry strength of the papers, measured in a laboratory, and the opinions of a 48-strong panel of men and women who tried them at home.

**Absorbency** Ability to hold water, measured in a laboratory.

**Softness** Rated by the panel.

**Degradability** We folded together five sheets of each paper, put them in the toilet bowl, waited one minute, then flushed them down a toilet bowl. We collected the contents and measured the extent of their disintegration.

KEY				
★	☆	○	◐	●
Best			Worst	
Best Buy				

Toilet roll	Specification			Performance				Score
	Price per roll (p)	Price per sheet (p)	Sheets per roll	Strength	Absorbency	Softness	Degradability	(%)
PREMIUM								
1 Andrex Puppies On A Roll	42	0.19	221	☆	☆	☆	☆	74
2 Charmin	41	0.23	178	☆	★	☆	○	74
3 Andrex	42	0.18	240	☆	☆	☆	☆	71
4 Velvet Double <sup>a</sup>	41	0.17	239	☆	☆	○	☆	65
5 Waitrose Ultra Soft	40	0.16	248	☆	☆	○	☆	65
6 Sainsbury's Supersoft	36	0.15	240	☆	○	○	☆	63
7 Somerfield Luxury	39	0.16	244	☆	◐	○	☆	56
8 Tesco Luxury Soft	36	0.15	243	○	☆	○	○	55
9 Morrisons Even Softer	35	0.15	239	☆	○	◐	☆	54
10 Co-op Luxury Soft	36	0.15	242	○	○	○	○	53
SUPER PREMIUM								
11 Andrex Quilts	47	0.29	160	★	★	★	○	84
12 Velvet Quilted	42	0.22	192	○	☆	★	☆	72
13 Marks & Spencer Soft With Aloe Vera	62	0.30	208	★	☆	☆	○	71
14 Morrisons Quilted	35	0.16	219	○	○	☆	☆	57
15 Tesco Embossed	40	0.18	219	○	◐	○	☆	53
16 Andrex Enriched With Aloe Vera	47	0.24	198	○	◐	☆	◐	52
RECYCLED								
17 Nouvelle	38	0.17	225	○	○	○	☆	55
18 Sainsbury's Revive 100% Recycled	36	0.15	237	☆	◐	◐	○	50
19 Co-op Soft 100% Recycled	39	0.14	277	☆	◐	◐	○	49
20 Morrisons Quality & Value Recycled	25	0.10	239	◐	●	◐	○	33

<sup>a</sup> A Velvet Double will soon be replaced with a new paper, Velvet Triple (not tested)