

Let's Get Packing! What Do You Need To Have In Your Hospital Bag?

We are all different – some of us like to be prepared early, some just get things together at the very last moment. That being said, you don't want to find yourself throwing things in a bag once you're already in labor, so make sure you pack your hospital bag plenty of time before the big day.

Since there's no way to predict exactly when your baby will make their arrival, we recommend having your bag packed and ready to go by the time you hit your **35-36th week of pregnancy** and it's a good idea not to leave it for later than **38 weeks**. That way, if the unexpected happens, you'll already have everything you need for the best possible start to your amazing journey into motherhood.

PS - this isn't really part of packing, but be sure to have your fridge and freezer stocked with food before you head out. You will be glad to have some meals ready when you get home.

Checklist:

THINGS TO BRING FOR MOM:

- NECESSARY DOCUMENTS:** Photo ID, insurance info, hospital forms and birth plan (if you have one)
- CELL PHONE AND CHARGER** with an extra long cord, we also recommend bringing a portable power bank just in case
- EYEGLASSES** (if you wear them) and contact lenses/solution

- MUSIC** can be very helpful during the early stages of labor and may help you surround yourself in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Have some good tracks ready and bring headphones
- TOILETRIES AND PERSONAL ITEMS:** hairbrush, hair dryer, hair ties, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, face wash, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, etc. Lip balm is essential (hospital air is very dry)
- SUGAR-FREE HARD CANDY OR LOZENGES** to keep your mouth moist during labor or dry mouth drops
- Non-perishable **SNACKS** and change for the vending machines
- CLOTHES FOR THE HOSPITAL:** 2-3 pairs of warm, nonskid socks, slippers, a warm robe or sweater, drawstring or elastic waist loose pants, sleepwear. If you plan on breastfeeding, you'll need tops with stretchy necklines or easy nursing access
- 2 MATERNITY BRAS** (no underwire) and **NURSING PADS** (even if you don't plan to nurse, you'll appreciate the support and leak protection)
- A few pairs of **THROWAWAY UNDERWEAR** (the hospital will have disposable pairs, which some women like and some don't). If you are prepping for a C-section, you might want to get low-rise postpartum underwear to accommodate your incision
- COMFORTABLE GOING-HOME CLOTHES** (you will most likely still need maternity clothes) and comfortable loose-fitting shoes, your feet might be swollen.

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AND HERE IS WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU TO BRING, BUT YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID:

- ❑ **A COMFY PILLOW** from home can make a huge difference, but keep in mind that it might get ruined
- ❑ **HEMORRHOIDS OINTMENT OR CREAM** (like PREPARATION H®) – if you deliver vaginally, you might end up with hemorrhoids. Even if you have a C-section, you could still deal with hemorrhoids left over from pregnancy
- ❑ **GOOD QUALITY SUPER ABSORBENT SANITARY PADS** will do a much better job than the ones you will get at the hospital
- ❑ **NIPPLE CREAM** If you plan to breastfeed, a little nipple cream can make a big difference. Some hospitals have it, but some don't. Make sure to bring some with you just in case
- ❑ **LAPTOP OR IPAD** just in case the hospital doesn't have a working TV or a good selection. Some light entertainment can go a long way if you have some downtime, can't sleep, or are staying longer than you planned
- ❑ **EYE MASK:** Nurses will be in and out of your room every couple of hours and maybe more. Get an eye mask so you can get a little extra sleep when the door opens, or so you can take a nap during the day
- ❑ **MAKEUP!** You will be looking at those pictures from the hospital a lot, so if you ordinarily wear makeup, make sure to bring some so that you can look your best.

THINGS TO BRING FOR BABY:

- ❑ **NEWBORN SWADDLE BLANKET:** There are so many brands out there. Buy one that wraps or zips or ties or has velcro. It is much easier to use than a hospital blanket, especially for first-time parents
 - ❑ **NURSING PILLOW** If you plan to nurse, you absolutely need this! The lactation consultant can show you the best way to use it
 - ❑ **A GOING HOME OUTFIT** and a blanket. It's a good idea to have at least a couple of options in different sizes on hand to ensure the best fit. It is always good to have backup
 - ❑ **PACIFIERS:** If you choose to use a pacifier with your newborn, make sure to pack a few different options in your baby's bag
 - ❑ **BABY BOTTLES:** if you already have a favorite brand and plan on bottle feeding, bring it with you.
- ❑ The hospital won't let you leave without an **INFANT CAR SEAT OR A CONVERTIBLE CAR SEAT**. Make sure you know how to properly install it in your vehicle

Bottom Line

The hospital or birthing center staff is usually more than accommodating with the essentials. You can always call and ask them for more details on what is being provided before you pack your hospital bag.

You know what you need to feel comfortable as you catch up on sleep, recover from your delivery, try to absorb information about the road ahead, and bask in the beauty of the new life you've brought into the world.

Your time staying in the hospital will fly by faster than you think, and before you know it, you'll be heading home with your newest little family member.