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Pregnancy - packing for hospital

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Summary

- Ask your hospital or birthing centre for information about what to pack, and what they supply.
- Collect items for your bag early, before you feel tired at the end of your pregnancy, and in case your baby comes early.
- Take only what you need, plus a few things that you really want.
- Leave valuables at home.
- Take a laundry bag, so you can send your labour clothes and any dirty baby clothes home for washing.

Packing for hospital is an exciting part of preparing for the birth of your baby.

Depending on your hospital, how long you will stay in hospital, and your birth plan, the items you need may vary.

The main considerations are what you and your baby need after the birth.

When to pack for hospital

Early in your third trimester (after 29 weeks and until you have your baby) is a great time to get organised. Think about what you might want to take with you, and set these items aside.

Doing this early is helpful because in your last few weeks of pregnancy, you may feel too tired or distracted or busy to buy or collect what you need. And sometimes babies arrive early.

At around 36 weeks, pack your bag so you're ready to go at a moment's notice.

Even if you are planning a home birth, it's a good idea to have a bag packed in case you need to go to hospital for a premature birth, or if you have pregnancy or birth complications.

As well as packing your bag, you need to plan:

- having petrol in your car for driving to the hospital
- standby babysitting for your other children
- the route you will take to the hospital
- a safe and comfortable space for your baby to sleep at home
- some stores (for example, toilet paper, nappies and paracetamol) for when you come home from hospital
- some frozen pre-cooked meals that you can use when you come home
- having enough credit on your mobile phone.

Hospital policy and what to pack

Different hospitals have different policies on what they provide for your baby (such as blankets and nappies) and for you (such as maternity pads).

They may also differ in what they allow you to bring from home (such as pillows and valuables). So, check what the hospital provides and what you can bring yourself.

If you're planning to give birth at a midwifery-led birth centre, your midwife will probably give you a list of what you need to pack.

Update your mobile phone contacts. If you don't have a mobile phone, make a list of vital phone numbers to keep in your bag (such as those of your partner, your birthing partner, and whoever will be looking after your other children).

What to pack for hospital

The following items are listed as a checklist, for you to print and tick off.

For hospital admission (to give to the maternity unit's admission desk)

- Your antenatal records (if you have them)
- Your obstetrician's details
- Your Medicare card and, if you have private health insurance, your insurance membership number
- Any hospital paperwork that you have completed in advance
- Money (possibly a credit card) for hospital parking

For the birth room

- Your [birth plan](#) – that is, a written list of what you'd like to happen when you are in labour and how you'd like to give birth

- A light dressing gown, for early labour when you may walk around the hospital corridors
- Slippers or non-slip socks
- An old nightdress or a t-shirt that you don't mind getting messy, to wear during labour
- Massage oil or lotion if you would like to be massaged during labour
- Any labour-helping devices, such as a birthing ball, heat pack or TENS pain relief machine
- Items such as books, magazines, games or knitting to help pass time in early labour
- Glasses or contact lenses, if you wear them (Note: your glasses may fog up during labour, and you cannot wear contacts during a caesarean.)
- A hairband and brush
- Extra pillows
- Toiletries (including lip balm) and tissues
- Music. Some hospitals won't let you use the delivery room electrical sockets, so you may need a battery operated CD player or a charged device. Check whether your hospital has a CD player or radio that you can use
- Aromatherapy oils and burner – check whether you can use an electric burner at your hospital (you won't be permitted to use one with a naked flame)
- Your phone (with credit) and a charger (though you may not be able to plug your charger in until you have moved to your room or ward)
- A camera
- Face washers
- Snacks
- Sport drinks, lemonade or diluted juice
- Spare change for vending machines
- A watch with a second hand, to time contractions

For after the birth

- Family phone numbers that you can call on a hospital phone, in case you are not allowed to use a mobile phone
- Your glasses or contacts, and contact solution
- Plenty of disposable undies, or several pairs of large, comfortable cotton undies
- Two or three comfortable and supportive bras, including maternity bras if you plan to breastfeed
- Sanitary pads – either 'super' size or maternity size (available at the supermarket)
- Books, magazines or music
- Front-opening or loose-fitting nighties or tops if you plan to breastfeed
- A few sets of comfortable day clothes, including something to wear home
- A dressing gown and slippers
- Ear plugs
- Breast pads
- Toiletries, including your hairbrush, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner
- A notepad and pen for tracking your baby's feeding sessions, writing down questions for your midwife or doctor, noting what the paediatrician says, jotting down memories of your baby's first few days and starting to fill out the birth registration paperwork
- A bag for sending dirty clothes home for washing

For caesarean births (in addition to the main list)

- Large undies that don't sit on your wound
- Clothing with no waistline, such as comfortable dresses that won't irritate your wound
- Comfort food – whatever makes you feel good
- Yoghurt – to get good bacteria into your stomach
- Mouthwash and dry shampoo – if you want to freshen up but can't get out of bed

For your baby

- Nappies and cotton wool or disposable cloth wipes (such as Chux, not commercially available baby wipes) and bottom cream (although check whether your hospital will supply these items). Refer to the Royal Women's Hospital's fact sheet on [how to care for babies' skin](#)
- Different sized jumpsuits for your baby (some 0000 and some 000) – a few sets
- Two baby blankets (not heavy)
- A few baby singlets
- Baby socks
- A few muslin squares for wrapping your baby
- Bags for soiled nappies, if you are using cloth nappies
- A baby capsule in the car. Be sure that you know how to fit your baby capsule properly into the car
- A baby carrier, in case you decide to go for a walk. The hospital will not let you walk around holding your baby: you must use a baby carrier, a hospital baby trolley or a pram
- Bottles, a breast pump for expressing breastmilk, formula (if you do not plan to breastfeed exclusively or at all). Check whether your hospital will supply these items

What not to pack for hospital

It's a good idea to leave jewellery, cash and other valuables at home.

Ask your doctor about medications, including vitamins. The hospital may provide everything that you need.

Ask your hospital whether you need nappies and bottle feeding equipment, or whether everything will be provided for you.

Your hospital may not have much storage space. A large suitcase will need to stay on the floor, and the cabinet by your bed is likely to be small. So pack only what you need (and a few things that you really want).

Where to get help

betterhealth.vic.gov.au

- Your hospital or birthing centre
- Your doctor
- Pharmacy
- [The Royal Women's Hospital](#)

[References](#)

- [Things to bring into hospital](#), 2015, Royal Women's Hospital.
- [Skin care for newborn babies](#), 2015, Royal Women's Hospital.

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Pregnancy and birth basics

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[After having a baby, you need to choose an effective method of contraception if you don't want to have another baby straight away...](#)
- [If you want to get pregnant, timing is everything](#)
[If you are trying for a baby, to increase your chances of conceiving, it helps to know when you are at your most fertile, and when is the best time to have sex...](#)
- [Pregnancy testing](#)
[Sometimes, a home pregnancy test may be positive when a woman isn't pregnant...](#)
- [Folate for pregnant women](#)
[Even women who aren't planning to have a baby should increase their folate intake in case of unplanned pregnancy...](#)
- [Pregnancy - unplanned](#)
[When a woman does not want to become a parent, her pregnancy options may include abortion or adoption...](#)
- [Contraception - emergency contraception](#)
[It is best to take emergency contraception as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours of having unprotected sex, but it still works well within 96 hours \(four days\)...](#)

Stages of pregnancy

- [Baby due date](#)
[Pregnancy is calculated from the first day of your last period, not from the date of conception...](#)
- [Pregnancy - week by week](#)
[Pregnancy is counted as 40 weeks, starting from the first day of the mother's last menstrual period...](#)

- [Pregnancy - signs and symptoms](#)

[All women experience pregnancy differently, and you will experience different symptoms at different stages of your pregnancy...](#)

- [Planning for labour and birth](#)

[Some of the signs and symptoms of going into labour may include period-like cramps, backache, diarrhoea and contractions...](#)

- [Conceiving a baby](#)

[The odds of a young fertile couple conceiving by having sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation \(the release of the egg from the ovary\) are approximately one in five every month. Around nine...](#)

- [Pregnancy stages and changes](#)

[It's helpful to have an idea of how your body may react to the different stages of pregnancy. It also helps to know how pregnancy may affect your emotions and feelings...](#)

Fertility issues and options

- [Adoption](#)

[Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can't live with their birth family...](#)

- [Surrogacy](#)

[Surrogacy is a form of assisted reproductive treatment \(ART\) in which a woman carries a child within her uterus on behalf of another person or couple...](#)

- [If you want to get pregnant, timing is everything](#)

[If you are trying for a baby, to increase your chances of conceiving, it helps to know when you are at your most fertile, and when is the best time to have sex...](#)

- [Abortion](#)

[All women should have access to accurate information about abortion so they can make their own informed decisions...](#)

- [Age and fertility](#)

[Age affects the fertility of both men and women, and is the single biggest factor affecting a woman's chance to conceive and have a healthy baby...](#)

- [Infertility in men](#)

[A couple isn't suspected of fertility problems until they have tried and failed to conceive for one year...](#)

- [Infertility in women](#)

[The odds of a young fertile couple conceiving by having sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation are approximately one in five every month...](#)

- [Weight, fertility and pregnancy health](#)

[Compared with women in the healthy weight range, women who are carrying extra weight are less likely to conceive...](#)

Keeping healthy during pregnancy

- [Pregnancy - morning sickness](#)

[Morning sickness is typically at its worst early in the day but it can strike at any point during the day or night...](#)

- [Postnatal exercise - sample workout](#)

[Make sure your abdominal muscles have healed before you do any vigorous tummy exercises, such as crunches...](#)

- [Healthy eating during pregnancy - tucker talk tips](#)

[Some foods should be avoided during pregnancy as they carry bacteria that could harm your unborn baby...](#)

- [Postnatal exercise](#)

[Always consult with your doctor or midwife before starting any postnatal exercise program...](#)

- [Pregnancy and your mental health](#)

[Finding out you are pregnant can be a very exciting time. But it can also make you feel uncomfortable, unwell, worried and make you wonder how you are going to cope. And it doesn't stop when the baby...](#)

- [Pregnancy and teeth](#)

[It's important to look after your teeth and gums when you're pregnant, as gum disease can affect your baby...](#)

- [Tests, scans and checks - pregnancy and labour](#)

[Tests can confirm your pregnancy and also monitor your baby's development in the womb...](#)

- [Alcohol and pregnancy](#)

[There's no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. It's safest to not drink at all during pregnancy, when trying to conceive, and while breastfeeding...](#)

- [Pregnancy and smoking](#)

[Smoking while pregnant exposes a woman and her unborn child to an increased risk of health problems...](#)

- [Immunisation and pregnancy](#)

[Immunisation can protect a woman and her unborn baby against many infectious diseases...](#)

- [Folate for pregnant women](#)

[Even women who aren't planning to have a baby should increase their folate intake in case of unplanned pregnancy...](#)

- [Pregnancy and exercise](#)

[Unless you have complications, you should be able to exercise throughout your pregnancy...](#)

- [Pelvic floor](#)

[Pelvic floor exercises are designed to improve muscle tone and prevent the need for corrective surgery...](#)

- [Pregnancy and diet](#)

[Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keep you and your developing baby healthy...](#)

- [Pregnancy and travel](#)

[Travelling to developing nations is not encouraged during pregnancy, due to the risk of disease and the standard of medical facilities...](#)

Health concerns during pregnancy

- [Miscarriage and Stillbirth - Coming to terms \(video\)](#)

- [Pregnancy - bleeding problems](#)

[Bleeding from the vagina in early pregnancy happens in almost one in four pregnancies...](#)

- [Newborn bloodspot screening \(video\)](#)

[Every newborn baby in Australia is offered a newborn bloodspot screening test to identify those at risk for rare, but serious, medical conditions including PKU, hypothyroidism and cystic fibrosis...](#)

- [Placenta previa](#)

[Placenta previa means the placenta has implanted at the bottom of the uterus, over the cervix or close by...](#)

- [Placental abruption](#)

[Placental abruption means the placenta has detached from the wall of the uterus, starving the baby of oxygen and nutrients...](#)

- [Pregnancy - pre-eclampsia](#)

[There is no evidence that pre-eclampsia is caused by emotional stress, working too hard or not getting enough rest...](#)

- [Lupus and pregnancy](#)

[Lupus can be controlled with medications, so the majority of affected women are able to have children...](#)

- [HIV and women – having children](#)

[Women living with human immunodeficiency virus \(HIV\), or women whose partner is HIV-positive, may wish to have children but feel concerned about the risk of transmission of the virus to themselves \(if...](#)

- [Alcohol and pregnancy](#)

[There's no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. It's safest to not drink at all during pregnancy, when trying to conceive, and while breastfeeding...](#)

- [Pregnancy and smoking](#)

[Smoking while pregnant exposes a woman and her unborn child to an increased risk of health problems...](#)

- [Pregnancy - obstetric emergencies](#)

[An obstetric emergency may arise when a woman is pregnant, or during her delivery. In this case, extra care is needed. A woman may need a lot of tests and treatments, and extended hospital stays. She...](#)

- [Postnatal depression \(PND\)](#)

[Postnatal depression can happen either a few days or weeks after the birth, with a slow or sudden onset...](#)

- [Molar pregnancy](#)

[Most molar pregnancies are diagnosed when bleeding early in pregnancy prompts an ultrasound scan...](#)

- [Miscarriage](#)

[A range of feelings is normal after a miscarriage, and they often linger for some time...](#)

- [Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder \(FASD\)](#)

[The World Health Organization recommends that pregnant women should avoid alcohol...](#)

- [Diabetes - gestational](#)

[Gestational diabetes is diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and usually disappears when the pregnancy is over...](#)

- [Asthma - pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)

[Pregnant women with asthma need to continue to take their asthma medication as it is important to the health of both mother and baby that the mother's asthma is well managed...](#)

- [Pregnancy and diet](#)

[Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keep you and your developing baby healthy...](#)

- [Birth defects explained](#)

[The cause of birth defects is often unknown, speak to your GP if you are at increased risk of having a baby with a congenital anomaly...](#)

- [Ectopic pregnancy](#)

[Ectopic pregnancy is caused by a fertilised egg not being able to move through the fallopian tube...](#)

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[It's very important for you and your baby to be looked after from the start of your pregnancy until after the birth of your baby...](#)

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[Multiple births are more common due to the advancing average age of mothers and the rise in assisted reproductive techniques...](#)

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- [Breastfeeding - the first days](#)

[Let your baby feed as much as they want in the first few days to help establish good breastfeeding patterns...](#)

- [Breastfeeding - when to start](#)

[Breastfeeding within the first hour after birth allows your baby to behave instinctively and breastfeed with little intervention...](#)

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[There's no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy. It's safest to not drink at all during pregnancy, when trying to conceive, and while breastfeeding...](#)

- [Vitamin K and newborn babies](#)

[With low levels of vitamin K, some babies can have severe bleeding into the brain, causing significant brain damage...](#)

- [Postnatal depression \(PND\)](#)

[Postnatal depression can happen either a few days or weeks after the birth, with a slow or sudden onset...](#)

- [Baby furniture - safety tips](#)

[Even if your baby furniture meets every safety standard and recommendation, your child still needs close supervision...](#)

- [Newborn bloodspot screening](#)

[Every newborn baby in Australia is offered a newborn bloodspot screening test to identify those at risk of rare, but serious, medical conditions...](#)

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