
Pregnancy - packing for hospital

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.
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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

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

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

Royal Women's Hospital

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