

PACKING FOR HOSPITAL BIRTH

Your hospital stay is most likely to be a short one. Therefore, packing only the items you are likely to need and use will make it easier to find the items you want during labour and keep your postpartum room uncluttered. In addition, packing two separate bags, one for labour and one for after the birth, will lighten your load as you make your way to the labour and delivery room and ensure easy access to your labour and comfort tools.

For Labour:

- Something familiar to wear while labouring (loose fitting for comfort and front opening for skin-to-skin and breast/chestfeeding)
- Robe and slippers
- Underwear that can accommodate a large pad
- Flip flops for the shower
- Warm socks
- Hair bands, elastics etc., to tie hair back
- Toiletries, toothbrush & paste, hairbrush, comb
- Lip balm
- Contact lens case, solution & glasses
- A variety of music with headphones and a speaker
- Massage tools, unscented oil, fan
- Rice socks or a hot water bottle
- Birth ball (check if your hospital has these to use)
- Favourite beverage, tea, candies to suck on (most hospitals will have popsicles available)
- A favourite healthy snack for you and your partner or support person
- Cash and credit cards for parking and vending machines
- Chargers for phones, cameras, tablets
- Your medical card
- Birth plan (at least three copies)

For Your Partner or Support Person:

- Extra change of clothing
- Bathing suit (for providing comfort measures in the shower)
- Prescription or regularly used medications (headaches can occur with lack of sleep and stress)
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, contact lenses case/solution, glasses etc.)
- Bedding, including extra pillows (ask about what to bring and sleeping arrangements at your hospital)

Other:

For Your Postpartum Stay:

- Sleepwear
- Loose, comfortable clothes for going home
- Cheap nursing bra (invest in nicer bras once breast/chestfeeding is well established and your breasts have settled into their new size)
- Toiletries and cosmetics, if desired
- Books, magazines, laptops etc.

For Baby - leave in the car until needed:

- Receiving blankets (2)
- Diapers
- Onesie or undershirt
- Sleeper
- Outfit for going home
- Blanket or outdoor clothing that is weather appropriate for the trip home
- Carseat that is correctly installed in your car and adjusted for your newborn

*Limit jewelry and other valuables as there are limited options to keep them secure in the hospital

PREPARING TO BIRTH AT HOME

Your Home:

- If planning a water birth, make sure the pool is inflated a few weeks before your due date
- Have you collected all the supplies on the list from your midwife?
- Do you have a "routine" planned out for labour?
- Do you have other areas besides the pool and bed where you can labour comfortably?
 - Make sure there are towels in that spot and that everything you need can be within arms reach (water bottle, snacks, birth ball, rebozo)
- Have you made or chosen a labour playlist if you plan on listening to music?

Siblings/other children (or animals):

- If you have other children or animals, would you want them present for labour and birth?
- If you go into labour during the night, will you have someone pick them up or keep them sleeping?
- Do you have a family member or close friend to take your children in the event of a hospital transfer? Have their phone number handy so that someone can make the call quickly.

Hospital transfer:

- Hospital bag (as above) in case of hospital transfer

You may want to discuss the protocols for hospital transfer, with your midwife, at your next prenatal appointment. Jot them down here:

Notes