

Ready for Anything from Labor to the NICU!

All-in-one Hospital Checklist for parents & baby

This list is organized by when or who you'll need it for, and each item includes an explanation of why it's included so you can pack smarter and customize as you go. I recommend one bag for the hospital and two that stay in the car: one for emergency fast labor and the other in case you have an extended NICU stay.

Hospital check-in & paperwork:

Keep these organized in a single folder. **Pro-Tip:** Attach a quick list of **last-minute everyday items you can't pack in advance and don't want to forget, like your eyeglasses, wallet, and keys, on top of your bag(s) or the front of this folder if it's on top so you don't have to try remembering everything while in labor.**

- ☐ **Photo ID & Insurance Card:** Required for check-in.
- ☐ **Medication List:** A current list of all your daily medications and supplements.
- ☐ **Birth Plan:** Print multiple copies for nurses on different shifts.
- ☐ **Hospital Paperwork:** Any other forms your facility requires.

Labor & Comfort Essentials

- ☐ **Phone Chargers with long cords:** All convenient outlets are reserved for medical equipment.
- ☐ **Earbuds:** For listening to calming music or audio during labor.
- ☐ **Lip Balm / Chapstick:** Breathwork and dry hospital air chap lips.
- ☐ **Lotion / Massage Oil:** For massage & counter-pressure during labor.
- ☐ **Hairbrush & Hair Ties:** To keep your hair securely out of your face.
- ☐ **Bible, Journal, & Pens:** For downtime, reflection, doodling, or logging notes.

Emergency Delivery Kit

Keep this separate in your car just in case labor moves too quickly on the drive. If you keep it in your trunk, move it within reach before the drive on delivery day! I plan to store my very clean blankets and towels meant for baby in a vacuum-sealed bag.

- ☐ **Soft pull-on dress:** If you go into labor you do not want to be in pants!
- ☐ **Hand sanitizer:** Having hands as clean as possible prevents infections
- ☐ **Plastic Sheet / Shower Curtain:** To protect your car seats if your water breaks en route.
- ☐ **Absorbent Pads:** Puppy pads or Chux pads for the car.
- ☐ **Bulb Syringe:** **Important! Suction fluid from baby's mouth and nose immediately after birth.**
- ☐ **Clean Large towels & Washcloths:** Bring several to dry baby immediately after birth and clean up.
- ☐ **Pre-Washed Receiving Blankets:** Place over baby while skin-to-skin to keep the heat in.
- ☐ **Newborn Hats / Beanies:** Prevent heat loss while skin-to-skin, keep blanket over baby too.
- ☐ **Heavy-duty Ziploc-type Freezer Bag:** To safely hold the placenta.
- ☐ **Zip Ties or birthing kit with Cord Clamps:** Emergency umbilical cord clamping.
- ☐ **Rubbing Alcohol:** To quickly disinfect scissors or tools.
- ☐ **Sterilized Scissors:** Sharp, clean medical scissors to cut the cord.
- ☐ **Kitchen Garbage Bags:** For disposal of soiled items.
- ☐ **Hydrogen Peroxide:** For post-emergency stain removal.

Postpartum Care & Toiletries

- ☐ **Medications, Vitamins, & Supplements:** Whatever you take regularly
- ☐ **Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Mouthwash, Shampoo, Conditioner, & Soap:** Bring your own if you prefer specific brands or just don't want to wait for busy staff to bring you something.
- ☐ **Big, Fluffy Towel:** Hospital towels are often tiny and scratchy; bring a comfortable one.
- ☐ **Shower Shoes:** Like flip-flops to protect your feet in shared hospital or NICU showers.
- ☐ A **Sharpie** or other permanent marker to **put your name on your peri bottle!** (I ended up misplacing mine in a shared hospital bathroom.)

Postpartum Clothing:

As a patient, you could argue that you'll just wear hospital gowns the whole time, but I know I feel like myself again once I can wear my own clothes after labor. Either way, you will need a going-home outfit; usually, the one you arrived in is dirty from water breaking and such.

- ☐ **Shoes and/or slippers** that are comfortable and easy to slip on and off. It's best not to walk barefoot in a hospital. (I just used a pair of indoor/outdoor moccasin/slippers everywhere)
- ☐ **Socks:** Bring plenty because hospitals are notoriously cold
- ☐ **Skin-to-skin friendly outfits**, maybe even a bra that clasps in the front to make full skin-to-skin easier
- ☐ Plenty of **comfortable underwear that is roomy** enough to accommodate large pads
- ☐ **Dark Bottoms:** In case pads leak, **black** is a good color for **bottoms**.
- ☐ **Going-home outfit** (nursing friendly)

Pumping & Nursing Setup

- ☐ **Breast pump:** To help establish milk supply as early as possible. I learned so much about how to pump more effectively from my lactation consultant that I highly recommend having your personal pump with you.
- ☐ **Hands-free pumping bra:** I wish I had this; it's the difference between reading on your phone while pumping vs. holding the flanges the whole time.
- ☐ **Nursing bras**, make sure to bring one or two that are **a couple of cup sizes too big** for when your milk comes in.

Extended NICU Stay Kit

Often, when Baby needs a NICU stay, Mom is discharged sooner than Baby and has to make sure she has the essentials the hospital provided while she was a patient. This bag can be left in the trunk, ready just in case.

- ☐ **Home Recovery Stash:** **Large maxi pads**, **Tucks pads**, and **Dermaplast** or some other perineal spray to relieve pain down there. (The hospital will provide these in labor/delivery/recovery, but you will definitely need some at home afterward. I packed mine when I was discharged to go to my baby, who was transferred to a bigger hospital's NICU.)
- ☐ **Pressure-relieving cushion** to sit on (I wanted one sitting on the NICU furniture for hours, but some studies say donuts can cut off circulation, so do your research and/or avoid donuts.)
- ☐ **Cafeteria-Ready Loungewear:** A few more outfits that are cozy enough to sleep in, nursing-friendly, and you would feel comfortable walking to the cafeteria.
- ☐ **Dirty Laundry Bags:** To keep your soiled clothes separate over a longer hospital stay. Using hospital trash bags risks housekeeping accidentally throwing your stuff away.
- ☐ **Insulated Cooler Bag:** For safely storing and transporting pumped breast milk home.

For Dad

- ☐ **Cash** for cafeteria and vending machines
- ☐ **Toiletries:** Deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash, and a comb.
- ☐ **Comfortable Clothes:** Easy slip-on shoes, extra socks, underwear, and clothes suitable for sleeping.
- ☐ **Front-Opening Shirts:** Button or snap-down shirts for easy skin-to-skin bonding with the baby.
- ☐ **Mints or Gum:** Optional; keeps breath fresh and can help with nerves.
- ☐ **Snacks, lots and lots of snacks!** Hospitals usually feed Mom at mealtimes, but not Dad. Choose snacks that are shelf-stable and include some high-protein options. Some ideas:
 - ☐ Trail mix, Granola bars, Mixed nuts, Sunflower or Pumpkin seeds
 - ☐ Beef jerky, beef sticks, or roasted Chickpeas
 - ☐ Squeeze pouches of applesauce, fruit/veggie smoothies, or even nut butter
 - ☐ Instant noodles, Oatmeal Packets (Almost every labor ward has a patient/family break room with a microwave or a hot water dispenser.)
 - ☐ Pretzels, Crackers, or Chips
 - ☐ Electrolyte Drink Packets

*Please note: **Mom, don't eat during labor unless your nurse says it's alright.** Usually, they have Moms wait to eat because vomiting during labor is common, or in case an emergency C-section is needed.*

For Baby

- ☐ **Car seat** – you can't leave until they check it out. Also, if your little one had any respiratory issues – as ours did at first- there is a 2-hour car seat test to pass in the car seat at the hospital, while hooked to a monitor to make sure oxygen levels and other vital signs remain stable while in the seat for a safe trip home.
- ☐ **Baby outfits with open feet and snap or zip fronts** for easy access needed for skin-to-skin, heel-sticks, and monitors, especially the pulse ox reader being on the feet (like in the nursery or NICU).
- ☐ **Baby socks** to keep those toes warm in spite of open feet PJs with monitors.
- ☐ **Going-home outfit!**