The Birth Bag: What to pack for the hospital

Have everything ready to go when you're 8 months pregnant, since you could go into labor at any time in the weeks before your [due date](https://www.babycenter.com/pregnancy-due-date-calculator). You may want to pack two small bags for the hospital or birth center: one for the items you'll need during labor, and another for items that you won't need until after you give birth. (See what to [pack for a scheduled c-section](https://www.babycenter.com/0_what-to-pack-for-the-hospital-when-youre-having-a-c-section_10316463.bc).)

Here's what experienced moms recommend packing:

What to pack for labour

* A **picture ID** (driver's license or other ID), your **insurance card**, and any **hospital paperwork** you need
* Your [birth plan](https://www.babycenter.com/calculators-birthplan), if you have one
* **Eyeglasses**, if you wear them. Even if you usually wear contact lenses, you may not want to deal with them while you're in the hospital.
* A **bathrobe**, a **nightgown** or two, **slippers**, and **socks**. Hospitals provide gowns and socks for you to use during labor and afterward, but some women prefer to wear their own. Choose a loose, comfortable gown that you don't mind getting dirty. It should be either sleeveless or have short, loose sleeves so your blood pressure can be checked easily. Slippers and a robe may come in handy if you want to walk the halls during labor.
* **Whatever will help you relax**. Here are some possibilities: your own pillow (use a patterned or colorful pillowcase so it doesn't get mixed up with the hospital pillows), music and something to play it on, a picture of someone or something you love, anything else you find reassuring. If you're going to be induced, think about bringing something to read or watch because it may be a while before labor is underway.

What to pack for your partner/labour coach

* A **camera** or **video camera** with **batteries**, **charger**, and **memory card.** Someone has to document the big event! Some hospitals don't allow videotaping of the birth itself, but there's usually no rule against filming during labor or after the birth. If you plan on using your phone to take photos or video, make sure it's fully charged and pack your charger. Note: Not all hospitals let you use plugs in the delivery room, so you might want to bring a battery-powered charger or another way to charge your devices that doesn’t require a plug.
* **Toiletries**
* Comfortable **shoes**and a few changes of comfortable clothes
* **Snacks**and **something to read or watch**
* **Money (or a credit card)** for parking and **change** for vending machines
* A **bathing suit**. If you want to take a bath or shower during labor, you may want your partner to get in with you to support you or rub your back.

What to pack for after you deliver

* A fresh **nightgown**, if you prefer to wear your own
* Your **cell phone** and **charger** or, if you'll be using the hospital phone, a **prepaid phone card**. After your baby's born, you or your partner may want to call family and friends to let them know the good news. Bring a list of everyone you'll want to contact so you don't forget someone important when you're exhausted after delivery.
* **Snacks**! After many hours of labor, you're likely to be pretty hungry, and you may not want to rely solely on hospital food. So bring your own – crackers, fresh or dried fruit, nuts, granola bars, or whatever you think you'll enjoy. A bottle of nonalcoholic champagne might be fun for celebrating, too.
* **Toiletries**: Pack a few personal items, such as a toothbrush and toothpaste, lip balm, deodorant, a brush and comb, makeup, and a hair band or barrettes. Hospitals usually provide soap, shampoo, and lotion, but you might prefer your own.
* Comfortable **nursing bras** or **regular bras**. Whether or not you [choose to breastfeed](https://www.babycenter.com/0_breastfeeding-getting-started_465.bc) , your breasts are likely to be tender and swollen when your milk comes in, which can happen anytime during the first several days after delivery. A good bra can provide some comfort, and breast pads can be added to help absorb leaks.
* Several pairs of **maternity underpants**. Some women love the mesh underwear usually provided by the hospital, but others don't. You can't go wrong with your own roomy cotton underpants. The hospital will provide sanitary pads because you'll bleed after delivery. Make sure you have a supply of heavy-duty pads waiting at home!
* A **book on newborn care**. The hospital will probably provide you with a book, but you may prefer your own. Of course, the postpartum nurses will be there to answer questions and show you how to change, hold, nurse, and bathe your newborn if you need guidance.
* **Photos of your other children**. When they [come to visit](https://www.babycenter.com/0_introducing-your-child-to-your-new-baby-overview_10313210.bc), they'll see that you haven't forgotten them.
* **Gifts for older siblings**. Some parents bring gifts for the new baby to "give" to big brothers and sisters.
* **A notepad or journal and pen or pencil**. Track your baby's feeding sessions, write down questions you have for the nurse, note what the pediatrician tells you, jot down memories of your baby's first day, and so on. Some people bring a baby book so they can record the birth details right away.
* **A going-home outfit**. Bring something roomy and easy to get into (believe it or not, you'll probably still look 5 or 6 months pregnant) and a pair of flat, comfortable shoes.

Essentials to pack for your baby

* An **installed** [**car seat**](https://www.babycenter.com/0_how-to-buy-an-infant-car-seat_5754.bc). You can't drive your baby home without one! Have a rear-facing car seat properly installed ahead of time and know how to buckle your baby in correctly.
* **A going-home outfit**. Your baby will need an outfit to go home in, including socks or booties if the clothing doesn't have feet, and a soft cap if the air is likely to be cool. Make sure your baby's outfit has legs (is not a baby "gown," for example) so the car seat strap can fit between them.
* A **receiving blanket**. The hospital will provide blankets for [swaddling your baby](https://www.babycenter.com/0_swaddling-your-baby_125.bc) while you're there, but you may want to bring your own to tuck around your baby in the car seat for the ride home. Make it a heavy one if the weather's cold.

What not to bring to the hospital or birth center

* **Jewelry**
* Lots of **cash**or **other valuables**
* **Medications**, including vitamins. Talk to your doctor ahead of time about anything you think you'll need to take during your stay, so the hospital can provide it.
* **Diapers**. The hospital will provide diapers for your baby while you're there. Leave your supply at home.
* A **breast pump**. If you end up needing a [breast pump](https://www.babycenter.com/0_how-to-buy-a-breast-pump_429.bc) for any reason, the hospital can provide one.

Moms' tips for packing a hospital bag

"For the drive to the hospital, you may want to bring a towel you don't care about and a garbage sack. Put the garbage sack down on your seat and then the towel. That way, if your [water breaks](https://www.babycenter.com/0_signs-of-labor_181.bc) on the way to the hospital, you don't have to worry about cleaning the car when you get home." – **Anonymous**

"Bring both your glasses and your contacts, along with storage case and solution. I wore my glasses during labor with my first one, but it got so hot, the glasses just fogged up and I couldn't see what was going on – very frustrating. And just trying to wear glasses during delivery was annoying and one frustration I could've done without. So bring both. You may want to switch back and forth for comfort or convenience or whatever." – **Anonymous**

"I brought a few changes of clothes, since you stay a few days after the baby is born. With hormones and everything, I sweated like crazy after I gave birth, so it was nice to change into some fresh pj's or some sweats or shorts during the day, especially with people always coming to visit. Just something that made me feel better." – **groovitha**

"Disposable underpants – best advice I ever got! The mesh panties they give you at the hospital with the sanitary pads are not so comfy ... and once you get home, you probably won't be graduating to just a pad or pantyliner for a couple of weeks and you'll run out of the mesh panties before then!" – **Anonymous**

Sourced from: <https://www.babycenter.com/packing-for-the-hospital-or-birth-center>