

Checklist: Hospital

Checking In

- Admission forms or registration papers
- Insurance card

For Labor

- Watch with second hand (to time contractions)
- Music (and something to play it on, i.e. CD player or iPod with speakers)
- Candles or aromatherapy (to make the 'sterile' hospital environment a bit more homey)
- Lip balm (in case your lips get dry)
- Hard candy, lozenges, or lollipops to suck on (your mouth might get dry)
- Hair bands or clips (in case your hair gets in your way; this is one minor frustration that is easily remedied with a small piece of elastic!)
- Tennis ball (or unused paint roller) to be used as a massage aid in easing labor pains (especially helpful if you are opting to have a drug-free labor)
- Massage lotion (if massage appeals to you as an aid during labor)

After Delivery

- Cord blood kit (Your doctor will need this so he can withdraw the cord blood immediately after delivery. Don't forget to have your partner call the messenger to pick up your precious cargo!)
- Camera (video and/or still) - Don't forget to charge the batteries!
- Cash/change for potential vending machine runs (you can also bring a small cooler, stocked with goodies)
- Nursing bra/pads (although the hospital gowns usually have handy little snap-open shoulders. And who cares if you leak through their couture sleepwear?)

For Your Stay

- Bathrobe
- Non-skid slippers or socks
- Nightgown or cozy, loose-fitting PJ's (although, sometimes the hospital gowns are not as horrible as you might have heard)
- Toiletries, including shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, and contact lens solution and case (if applicable)
- Makeup bag
- Hair brush/hair dryer (Some hospitals have hair dryers; others may not.)
- Pillow (with a colorful pillowcase so it doesn't get thrown in with the hospital laundry)
- "Granny" panties (although you'll probably love the hospital's disposable underwear), since you might not quite be ready for your Cosabella thong. If you had a c-section, you'll want to be careful not to rub against your incision, and if you gave birth vaginally, you might find yourself creating a 'cocktail' of soothing treatments - maxi pad, witch hazel, ice pack, numbing spray or cream - that your string bikini can't handle. Some new moms have found disposable convenience with...yup, Depends.
- Magazines or other reading material
- Outfit to wear home - one that's comfy and loose. (You may not be pregnant anymore, but there is still extra fluid retention on top of the possible few pounds you gained from those late night ice cream cravings. Figure that you'll be looking about 5 months pregnant.)

For Your Partner's Stay

- Toiletries
- Change of clothes
- Magazines or other reading material

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For the Baby

- Baby book (if your hospital still does ink footprints; some have changed to high-tech 'lo-jack' anklets for identification) - or just a good, archival piece of paper that you can paste in your baby book once you get home.
- Going home outfit and cap
- Receiving blanket

Ideas

- Bring cookies or some kind of treat for the nurses. (You'll be surprised at how appreciated this gesture can be. If you don't feel like stopping by Mrs. Field's on the way to the hospital, you can send someone out right after you check in.)
- Buy a newspaper on the day your baby is born. (The perfect memento!)
- Have a gift for your new baby's sibling(s)
- Bring a bag to take home any gifts you receive – plus all the extras that the hospital offers. These extra goodies might include:

Some goodies for your little one:

- Plastic basin (great for giving baby his first sponge bath at home)
- Nasal aspirator
- Thermometer
- Diapers
- Swaddling blanket
- Undershirt
- Cap

Plus handy items for you:

- Disposable underwear (what an ideal!)
- Maxi pads (you'll need these for the next several weeks, so stock up while you can.)
- A squeezable water bottle to rinse off your nether regions (toilet paper might be too harsh after a vaginal birth)
- Instant ice packs
- A supply of laxatives (without these, some women avow that this first bathroom experience is more painful than the birth itself)