

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR BIRTH BAG

FACTSHEET EIGHT



It's worth getting a bag together for all the items you might need to give birth. Even if you are planning a homebirth, having everything in one place can support this for those supporting you at home and for transferring to hospital.

It's worth remembering that mums do turn up at the hospital with nothing and that hospitals have access to all the REAL essentials (and actually what do you really need to give birth except you!). "These are all suggested items which may provide comfort and support to help your labour and birth experience"

www.edinburghbirthandbaby.com

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR BIRTH BAG - FOR LABOUR

- Maternity notes
- Birth plans
- T-shirt or nightie that you feel good in or even better – your partners shirt or t-shirt so you can smell their scent (our sense of smell is particularly strong and if their smell reassures us and makes us feel safe then this is ideal)
- Old pants that you can bin
- Warm socks – your feet can get cold
- Trainers – you might be walking around for a bit – wear really comfortable shoes
- Bikini top for birth pool if you're planning one and would prefer to not be totally naked
- Shawl or cardigan (not your best ones) that you can put on or off – mums fluctuate temperatures during labour. Make sure it FEELS good so you FEEL good – ie it's nice material not something that makes you feel itchy or annoying
- Snacks – some ideas are fruit, nuts, energy balls, honey, dark chocolate, jelly sweets
- Coconut water/sports drink/fruit juice – you need a gentle sugar hit so fruit juice is helpful – apple or blackcurrant are good choices
- Music that you like or background noise (tunes for dancing, songs you can sing along to, nature noises, etc) – it doesn't need to be one specific type of music. You may have a longer labour and after 12 hours listening to one list on repeat might start to really annoy you (or those around you)
- Lip balm
- Hair band if needed
- A water bottle that's easy to drink from
- Flannels/muslin for washing face/chest
- Tea towel for holding ice (hospital have towels etc so you don't need this there)

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For labour

- A sheet to cover the bed and pillow from home - needs to smell like home
- Aromatherapy kit - some hospitals will provide but a diffuser with some oils - maybe clary sage with a citrus oil (suggestions
 - Bergamot/neroli/grapefruit/mandarin) and either lavender or frankincense (up to 3 oils in total)
- Fairy or other low level lights to make the room low lit
- Birth affirmations
- Photos or other things to help personalise the room - maybe things from any mood/vision boards you've been using, maybe memories of time you were strong etc
- Blue tac for any signs or affirmations

For transfer to hospital

- Large headphones to help keep you in your headspace especially if you are hypnobirthing
- Speakers for music/hypnobirthing tracks - ie ones that link to your phone/ music device
- Hat/scarf/shawl to help you to create privacy on the way to the hospital/ birth centre and keep you cocooned.

Remember that your partner will be dragging everything that you pack along long hospital corridors. Try to keep it as minimal as possible. Your partner will also need a few supplies to keep them going - one idea is porridge or noodle pots or anything where you can just add hot water as they provide much needed energy with just the addition of boiling water which is easily available in the hospital.

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Postnatal bag for Mum

- Comfortable clothes – vests with support are ideal and tracksuit trousers are very handy and some cardigans or hooded tops – remember you can get really hot in the hospital
- Nighties – with either straps that pull down easily or else buttons so you can breastfeed
- Maternity pads
- BIG pants – the ones you get in the supermarkets – high wadded and that after you've finished bleeding you're happy to bin. The hospital will give you disposable ones but they are very uncomfortable and you need at this time to be as comfortable as possible
- Breast pads – the best ones are reusable bamboo ones
- Nursing bras
- Toiletries etc

Baby bag

- 3x Sleepsuits
- 3X Vests
- Knitted cardigan
- Hat
- Nappies
- Something you've been sleeping with (ie comforter/teddy etc)
- If winter baby – a snowsuit etc
- Cotton wool or flannels for cleaning bottoms