

Packing for the Hospital

A MOTHER'S GUIDE TO PREGNANCY AND BIRTH | BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATIONS | VCUMOM.COM

You may want to pack 2 small bags for the hospital, one for the items you'll need during labor, and another for items that you won't need until after you give birth. It's a good idea to have everything ready to go when you're 8 months pregnant.

Packing checklist:

For labor

- Picture ID** (driver's license or other ID), your **insurance card**, and any **hospital paperwork** you need
- Your **birth plan**
- 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**. VCU provides 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 around 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, electric tea candles for soft lighting, 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.*

For your partner / labor coach

- A **camera** with batteries, charger, and memory card to capture the moments before or after birth. If you plan on using your phone to take photos, make sure it's fully charged and pack your charger.
- 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
- 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.
- Change of clothes**

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.
- 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. VCU provides soap, body wash, shampoo, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, and mouthwash, but you are welcome to bring your own.

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- Comfortable **nursing bras** or **regular bras**
- Several pairs of **maternity underpants**. VCU provides disposable underwear, but you may want to wear your own roomy cotton underpants. VCU will provide sanitary pads. Make sure you have a supply of heavy-duty pads waiting at home!
- Photos of your other children**. When they come to visit, they'll see that you haven't forgotten them.
- Notepad or journal and pen or pencil**. Track your baby's feeding sessions, write down questions you have for the nurse, note what the caregivers and lactation consultants tell 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.
- Going-home outfit**. Bring something roomy and easy to get into and a pair of flat, comfortable shoes.

For your baby

- Installed car seat**. 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.
- 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.
- Receiving blanket**. VCU will provide blankets or a sleep sack for swaddling your baby while you're with us, 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

- Jewelry
- Lots of cash or other valuables
- Medications, including vitamins. Talk to your doctor or midwife ahead of time about medications you think you'll need to take during your stay, so the hospital can provide it.
- Diapers. VCU will provide diapers for your baby while you're with us.
- A breast pump. If you end up needing a breast pump for any reason, VCU can provide one for your use while in the hospital.
- A birthing ball, unless you prefer to use your own. VCU provides birthing balls to those who plan to use them.