

# What to Pack for the Hospital

Consider bringing the following with you to the hospital.

## Labor Gear

- Pen and pad for taking notes, and your pregnancy organizer
- Your birth plan (several copies, so all staff, on all shifts, can get one)
- Stopwatch or watch with second hand to time contractions
- Massage oils or lotions
- Your favorite pillow
- If you have long hair, a clip or scrunchie to keep it out of your face
- Sugarless candies or lollipops to keep your mouth moist
- A tennis ball or plastic rolling pin—both make excellent backrub tools—or an actual massager
- Snacks for during labor (your own snacks will be limited, and must be approved by your practitioner; your partner should pack sandwiches and nutritious nibbles so they don't have to leave your side to find something to eat)
- Diversions for a long labor: music, puzzles, magazines, books, a deck of cards, laptop, handheld electronic games
- Any mementos you'll want with you, such as family photos
- Your Who to Call list, and a prepaid phone card or calling card (be forewarned: Most hospitals don't allow cell phones)
- Camera and/or video camera—even if you don't want to capture your labor and delivery experience, you'll definitely want to capture your baby on film, and someone in the room will be happy to take your first family portrait
- A small basket of goodies for the staff to give along with the birth plan

## Personal Items

- A baby care book, like the Good Housekeeping Book (if you think you'll have a chance to look at it)
- A baby book for recording everything

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, and mouthwash
- Hairbrush and comb
- All your essential toiletry items (don't forget moisturizer)
- Extra absorbent maxi-pads (the hospital will provide some, but you might want to use your own brand )
- Snacks for after delivery—don't count on the hospital or birthing center to provide them in the middle of the night
- Champagne or sparkling cider to celebrate with
- Shower gel, face wash, shampoo, conditioner, makeup, and whatever else it takes to make you feel human again after delivery

## Clothes

- Extra pairs of underwear suitable for wearing with maxi-pads and a nursing bra
- Nightgown or pajamas, socks, and slippers
- Comfortable outfit to head home in
- Going-home outfit for baby (don't forget socks or booties and a receiving blanket, plus extra layers if it's cold). Bring along a few diapers, although the hospital will probably provide them.

## Other Essentials

- A car seat can only protect your child if you use it correctly. To make sure you install the car seat correctly, follow the directions that come with it, or call the **CAR-SAFE Line**, a toll-free phone line for Massachusetts residents who have questions about passenger safety and related Massachusetts laws. Staff can answer specific questions about passenger safety, distribute educational materials, and refer callers to local resources. Contact the **CAR-SAFE Line** at **1-800-CAR-SAFE (1-800-227-7233)**. If outside of Massachusetts, check with your state's Department of Public Health for your local resource.

**Tip:** Call your local police or fire department to find out if your town has a car seat safety program. There may be a professional who can help you install your child's car seat in your car.

This information is provided by the Division for Perinatal, Early Childhood, and Special Health Needs within the Department of Public Health.