FREE PRINTABLE · 3RD TRIMESTER

The hospital bag checklist

Mom, baby and partner, on one printable page. Tick as you pack — and leave half of it at home, because you will not need it.

For mom

Recovery & bathroom

- ☐ Two angled peri bottles — one for upstairs, one for downstairs
- ☐ Overnight maxi pads, plus a pack of the enormous hospital ones
- ☐ Disposable postpartum underwear (buy a size up)
- ☐ Perineal cooling spray or witch-hazel pads
- ☐ High-waisted underwear that clears a C-section incision
- ☐ Stool softener — ask your provider before you pack it
- ☐ Nipple balm and hydrogel pads, kept cold

Comfort & clothing

- ☐ Two nursing bras, no underwire
- ☐ Loose tops that open at the front, not ones you pull over your head
- ☐ A robe and one pair of socks you do not mind losing
- ☐ Slippers with a real sole for hospital corridors
- ☐ A firm cushion and a footstool for the feeding chair at home

The boring things that matter

- ☐ A ten-foot phone charger
- ☐ Water bottle with a straw, one you can open one-handed
- ☐ Snacks that do not need a fridge
- ☐ Your own pillow, in a patterned case so it comes home
- ☐ A notebook for questions and for the first few days
- ☐ Your provider’s after-hours number, written down, not just in your phone

For baby

- ☐ Two or three zip-up sleepers, newborn size
- ☐ One going-home outfit, plus a spare in the next size up
- ☐ Swaddle or sleep sack, two
- ☐ Newborn diapers and wipes — the hospital supplies these, bring a few anyway
- ☐ Car seat, installed and checked before you go
- ☐ A hat and a blanket for the ride home
- ☐ Six sleepers and six bodysuits, because laundry will not happen
- ☐ Burp cloths, more than you think
- ☐ Nail file or baby scissors
- ☐ A dim night light for night feeds
- ☐ A safe sleep space: firm flat mattress, no bumpers, no pillows

For your partner

- ☐ Phone charger, and the car keys in the same pocket every time
- ☐ A change of clothes and a toothbrush — labour is long
- ☐ Cash or a card for the cafeteria and the parking machine
- ☐ A written list of who to text, and when
- ☐ Snacks for the person who will not leave the room
- ☐ Their own pillow, because hospital chairs are not beds

Leave at home

- ☐ Anything you would be heartbroken to lose
- ☐ Your whole makeup bag and nice toiletries

- More than two books — you will not read them
- A laptop, unless you genuinely have to work
- Newborn clothes in size 0–3 months; they will swim in them
- Diaper cream, bottles and a pump — the hospital has what you need in the first days

What hospitals do not give you

The nine things worth having in the bathroom basket at home before you leave.

1. Angled peri bottle — hospitals give you a straight one, and the angle is the whole point
2. Ice-pad maxis, or the DIY version your nurse will show you
3. Stool softener, cleared with your provider
4. A second phone charger, permanently by the feeding chair
5. Nursing pads, reusable ones if you can
6. A water bottle with a straw, and a second one
7. Frozen meals, made at 35 weeks
8. A list of three people you can call at 2am
9. The maternal mental health hotline, saved in your phone before you need it

Call your provider, or 911, if you have:

- A headache that will not shift, or swelling in your face or hands
- Chest pain, or trouble breathing
- Blurred vision, or seeing spots
- A fever over 100.4°F / 38°C
- Bleeding that soaks a pad in an hour, or clots bigger than a golf ball
- A red, hot, painful patch on your breast with a fever
- A wound that is opening, smelling, or getting more painful
- Thoughts of harming yourself or the baby — this is an emergency, and it is treatable

Struggling, and in the US? The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline is free, confidential and open 24/7: call or text 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262). This checklist is what worked for one mom, not medical advice.