

What to take to hospital

The time is drawing close, if you're at baby number one you'll probably have this packed six months in advance, if you're at baby number three you'll probably pack as the contractions start. There is no right time for "when to pack," it's more for your own sanity to pack early if you're the anxious type (like me). As a midwife, I can tell you a few tips and tricks to have handy in your bag for your hospital stay. Now, if you're having a natural birth and



everything goes swimmingly with no issues, you may even be able to go home same day bub is born, if you're having a caesarean, you may be in for 3-5 days post bub. Realistically, you'll be wanting to start gathering these items in the general vicinity of your suitcase by around week 35 in case bub decides to venture out early. Having everything prepared and ready will give you some peace of mind, knowing that if you *do* go into early labour, you're well ready to roll.

Let's get you going:

- Pads, I hate to be the bearer of bad news but there will be bleeding no matter what type of birth you have so best bring pads and undies you're going to be comfortable with and pack more than you think you need. Last thing you want is the hospital supplied tanker pads they give you that are bigger than your pillow.
- A few changes of clothes for bub. Yes, pack some cute ones so you can take the super cute hospital pics, but pack more than enough for say five days incase you have any complications or require a longer stay.
- Nappies, wipes, and nappy cream. Yes, some hospitals can provide nappies but it is an expectation you will have your own so make sure you have a stack ready for bub.
- Nipple shields and cream. You won't know you need it until you do and lord help the poor nip noops when you don't have it. Nothing you want less than sore cracked nip noops on top of a newborn baby right after the stress of birth.
- Talking about the stress of birth, comfort measures for yourself. Are you an oily girl and love your essential oils? Do you want a heat pack for your back? What about moisturiser for a back rub from baby daddy for all the aches and pains
- Your own pillow. After however long it takes bub to come out (could be hours could be days, sorry girls, bub can sometimes take his/her time) you're already going to be short on sleep AND have a newborn who you will be uber aware of and will wake up at every noise he/she makes. You need your own pillow, the smells of home, the known comfort, not the crunchy plastic covered pillows the hospital are going to give you.
- Swaddle blankets. Yep, you want your own cute comfy swaddle blankets for bub. The hospital ones are a bit starchy and harsh so yes you can use theirs but likely you'll want something soft and photogenic for bub.

- Slippers. You'll be up and down to the bathroom for the first couple of days and will want something rather than the cold hospital floors to waddle around on.
- Nightgowns and/or dressing gown. You may want two or three depending on how many days you end up staying. Make it comfortable as you'll probably stay in them the whole time. Remember, you will likely want front access, especially if you are breastfeeding. If you're a first time mumma you will possibly have a lactation consultant pop in and your midwives will come in to teach you how to express and latch, maybe for this you might want PJ tops and bottoms so you're not having to pull your nightie up and down every couple of hours.
- Bathroom supplies.

Toothbrush and toothpaste <input type="checkbox"/>	Body wash <input type="checkbox"/>
Moisturiser and face creams <input type="checkbox"/>	Sanitary wipes <input type="checkbox"/>
Deodorant <input type="checkbox"/>	Hair brush <input type="checkbox"/>
Nail file <input type="checkbox"/>	Face cloth <input type="checkbox"/>
Hair ties <input type="checkbox"/>	Lip balm <input type="checkbox"/>
Shampoo and conditioner <input type="checkbox"/>	Dry shampoo <input type="checkbox"/>
- The "going home" outfit for both you and bub.
- Capsule or carseat at the ready and the base fastened into your car.
- Snacks. You'll get nibbly throughout your stay and don't want to rely on hospital food and if you miss the food trolley you'll be stick with the bog standard sandwiches or cheese and crackers if you're lucky.
- Water bottle. You'll want drink handy for in the middle of the night so you don't have to get up and move about, you may be sore or have bub fallen asleep on you. Last thing you want is to have to get up and move about to get water.
- Ear plugs and an eye mask. You may be lucky to have your own room but chances are if you go public, you'll be sharing a room so you'll have not only your bub but your neighbour and their screaming bub.
- Entertainment. Maybe your iPad with netflix at the ready, magazines, a book, knitting (hey yes I love knitting). Anything to keep you occupied in the wee hours when you're keyed up and can't sleep.
- Phone/device chargers. No good when it's all said and done and your phone is cactus.
- Medical folder/documents. You'll no doubt be given tons of pamphlets and a blue book (or the likes) book for you to now cart to every bub medical update. This will keep all baby's vaccination documents.
- Baby book (optional). You may want to wait until you're home for this but you also might want to fill it out soon as bub is born.
- Notebook and pen. You may have bits and pieces you want to write down as you go, quick bub's measurements, your room neighbours' details if you get chatting, things that come to you in the middle of the night.
- Pacifier. Some midwives recommend against this so soon, the research is mixed so do your own research and go with what you're comfortable with. If you do decide to go with the pacifier option, have them packed and ready to roll.
- Maternity bra and breast pads. Once again, if you're breastfeeding, you're going to need access to them tiddies on a regular basis. Maternity bras at the ready for the girls.
- Undies. Big ones. Even take baby daddies!! (yes, I've seen it). You'll be needing to fit a pad in there remember so stash the g's for now.

- T-shirt or comfortable bra for birth. If you're planning on getting in a birth tub you may need a few as they will get wet.
- Plastic bag for dirty laundry after.
- Tim tams and snacks for your baby daddy, doula, support person, or even your midwives.
- Medicare and health insurance cards and a bit of spare cash in case you need to pay for something or send someone out for some cheeky chocolate (or sushi) after the big day.
- Nursing pillow. You'll be wanting that skin to skin and comfort snuggles well before you get home. Might be a bit more to lug home with you but at 3am when you have that perfect snuggle bond with bub, you'll be thankful you brought it. Not to mention, your midwives will want to set you up with your feeding pillow how you will be feeding at home.
- Ural sachets. Sounds strange I know but it can reduce the acidity in your urine making it sting less when you pee. Win win! Check with your midwives as they may need to have this charted for you.
- Poop softeners. While we're at it, this can be a nightmare, especially if you have had a caesarean. Nobody needs to strain right now no matter what type of birth you had, so softening things up is a great idea. Have a look for chocolate Movicol, it is safe when breastfeeding (DEFINITELY check with your local provider for your specific situation) – this can also be provided by the hospital, please check the brand is safe for breastfeeding. See above about checking with your midwives.
- Comfy clothes. Especially nothing tight around your waist if you've had a caesarean, you'll not want anything rubbing, brushing, or pushing up against your now very tender scar.
- Singlets, onesies, stretch n grow suits, sockets, beanies, for bub. If you're in hospital for 3-5 days, you're going to need a few changes for bub.
- Bottles, sterilizer, formula – hospitals do not supply formula as it is in the breastfeeding initiative that hospitals must not supply or promote formula feeding, so you'll have to BYO here.