FREE PRINTABLE · HOSPITAL BAG

Hospital bag list for a planned induction or cesarean

The usual list, plus the extras a high-risk stay can call for

Check what you need and cross off the rest. Pack it a few weeks early, and keep it where your partner can find it.

An induction can happen in steps, and it may take more than one try.[1] A hospital stay after a cesarean usually runs a few days.[2] So pack for more than one night, and leave room in the bag for what you bring home.[6]

GRAB FIRST

Papers and plans

- [ ] Photo ID and insurance card[6]
- [ ] Both birth plans, printed
- [ ] A folder for all the paperwork[6]
- [ ] Care-team contacts: OB, MFM, other specialists, pediatrician and doula
- [ ] Your medication and supplement list. Ask ahead which of your own medications to bring, since the hospital pharmacy usually supplies them.[6]
- [ ] Your recent logs: blood sugar, blood pressure or kick counts

IF YOU HAVE DIABETES

Ask your care team first

Before your date, ask who manages your blood sugar during labor and after birth, and whether you can keep wearing your pump and CGM in the hospital, and how your insulin plan changes after the birth. Write their answers on your birth plan.

- [ ] Your written blood sugar and insulin plan from your care team
- [ ] Meter, strips and lancets
- [ ] A spare CGM sensor, and the phone or receiver that reads it
- [ ] Pump supplies: spare sets, reservoirs or pods, and batteries
- [ ] Glucose tabs or gel for lows
- [ ] Insulin pens or vials, only if your team says to bring your own
- [ ] A backup meter, and a charger for every device
- [ ] A pouch or clip for your pump, since gowns have no pockets
- [ ] Snacks you know how to count, for after the birth

Your baby's blood sugar may be checked after birth, and some babies spend time in a special care unit so it can be watched.[5] Ask what that looks like at your hospital.

IF YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE OR PREECLAMPSIA

Bring your numbers and your signs

- [ ] Your home blood pressure cuff and log, if you use one[3]
- [ ] Your blood pressure medication list
- [ ] The warning signs your team gave you, written down

Preeclampsia can also develop in the weeks after birth, and for people with chronic high blood pressure, readings often go up in the weeks after delivery.[3] Ask your team what to watch for, and how to check, once you are home. If magnesium sulfate might be part of your care, ask what it means for getting up and holding your baby, and plan for your partner to stay close.

FOR A LONG INDUCTION

Comfort for the waiting

- [ ] A long phone charging cable[7]
- [ ] Your own pillow and blanket[7]
- [ ] Loose, comfortable clothes[7]
- [ ] Non-slip socks or slippers[7], and shower shoes[6]
- [ ] Glasses, if you wear contacts[6]
- [ ] Lip balm, hair ties, a hairbrush and your own toiletries[6]
- [ ] A big water bottle with a straw
- [ ] A sleep mask, or a small fan
- [ ] Headphones, downloaded shows and a book[7]
- [ ] A massage ball or handheld massager[6]
- [ ] Snacks and drinks for your partner, and for you if your team says yes

FOR CESAREAN RECOVERY

Things many families bring

- [ ] High-waisted underwear and loose pants that sit above the incision
- [ ] Slip-on shoes, so there is no bending
- [ ] Two or three nursing or sports bras[6]
- [ ] A small pillow for the ride home
- [ ] Your own breast pump and clean parts, if you plan to pump and your hospital encourages it[6]

The first few times you get out of bed after a cesarean, a nurse or another adult should help you, and the incision is usually sore for the first few days.[2] Plan who will help you at home, too.

FOR YOUR PARTNER

They are staying too

- [ ] A change of clothes and a sweater
- [ ] Toiletries and their own medications
- [ ] Snacks, a water bottle and a charger
- [ ] A pillow
- [ ] Cash or a card for parking and vending machines

FOR THE RIDE HOME

For the baby

- [ ] An installed car seat[4]
- [ ] A going-home outfit in two sizes
- [ ] A blanket for the car

IF YOUR BABY MIGHT NEED THE NICU

Just in case

- [ ] A top or robe that opens down the front, for skin-to-skin[8]
- [ ] A notebook and pen for questions and names[7]
- [ ] The just-in-case NICU packing list, for everything else

LEAVE AT HOME

What you can skip

- Jewelry and valuables. Some hospitals ask you to remove rings, especially for a cesarean.[6]
- Candles. Bring battery ones if you want the light.[6]
- Most diapers, wipes and pads. Hospitals usually provide them for your stay,[6] but call ahead to check.

YOUR LIST

Anything else to pack



Your OB or MFM team knows your situation best. Bring this list to them.

SOURCES, CHECKED NOVEMBER 2026

1 ACOG, "Labor Induction". www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/labor-induction
2 ACOG, "Cesarean Birth". www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/cesarean-birth
3 ACOG, "Preeclampsia and High Blood Pressure During Pregnancy". www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/preeclampsia-and-high-blood-pressure-during-pregnancy
4 ACOG, "How to Tell When Labor Begins". www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/how-to-tell-when-labor-begins
5 NIDDK (NIH), "Pregnancy if You Have Diabetes". www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/diabetes-pregnancy
6 Cleveland Clinic, "What To Pack in Your Hospital Bag". health.clevelandclinic.org/what-to-pack-in-hospital-bag
7 Vanderbilt Health, "High-risk delivery and NICU stays: What to pack in a hospital bag". my.vanderbilthealth.com/high-risk-delivery-and-nicu-stays-what-to-pack-in-a-hospital-bag/
8 American Academy of Pediatrics (HealthyChildren.org), "Skin-to-Skin Contact". www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/preemie/Pages/About-Skin-to-Skin-Care.aspx

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