

## What to Bring With You to the Birth Center When You Go In Labor

We suggest that you pack three small bags for your birth:

- one for the items you will personally need during labor,
- one that your spouse (or labor coach) will need,
- one for items that you won't need until after you give birth and

When you arrive at the birth center, we recommend you only bring inside the bag for your labor and your spouse's bag. This will save space in the birth center. Someone can go out to your car to get your "after birth bag" after your baby arrives.

Also, make sure you have your **car at least half full of gas** at all times after you reach 37 weeks gestation. You don't want to have to think about getting gas on your way to the birth center or worse have to fill up before a transport. So make sure your care has plenty of gas and is always ready to go.

We recommend you have these bags ready to go by 37 weeks gestation, since any time after 37 weeks is when you can safely birth at the birth center. Here's a list of the things we recommend for each bag:

### For the labor bag:

- **Eyeglasses**, if you wear them. Even if you usually wear contact lenses, you may not want to deal with them while you are in labor.
- **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. We provide soap and shampoo, but you might prefer your own.
- **Comfortable "labor" clothes such as nightgowns or large t-shirts** (you will need two: one spare just in case) 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.
- Several pairs of **maternity underpants**. Some women love the mesh underwear that we provide at the birth center, but others don't. You can't go wrong with your own roomy cotton underpants. We also will provide sanitary pads because you'll bleed after delivery. But make sure you have a supply of heavy-duty pads waiting for you at home!
- **Comfortable bras** (optional) – This is optional while in labor and totally depends on your own preferences. But some women prefer to have the support of a comfortable bra during labor.
- **Water Birth Clothing** (optional) – some women like to wear a swim suit top or sports bra or large easy to remove t-shirt in the water. Some wear nothing. Just keep in mind that your midwife needs to have easy access for vaginal exams (no bottoms) and your baby will need to be able to get to your breast easily right after the birth.
- **A Bathrobe**. The birth center provides a bathrobe for you to wear, but some women prefer to wear their own.
- **Slippers and/or socks** Slippers might come in handy if you want to walk around the cooler months. We have wood floors that can cool during the winter months.
- **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 birth center pillows), music on an ipad, ipod or iphone or bring something to play it on, a picture of someone or something you love, anything you find reassuring.
- **Food or snacks for labor** – (or money to purchase as needed) – we keep copies of menus from local restaurants in the area, some of which deliver. But you will also have full access to our kitchen at the birth center. So if you want family members to cook or prepare food for themselves or you during labor, please let us know and then you will need to bring food with you. The birth center does stock high

energy snacks and drinks but does not provide meals. You will need to consider meals that might be needed during labor and either bring food to prepare or be ready to order from a nearby restaurant.

- Don't forget your **phone charger**!
- And in the event of a transport, you will also need to bring: your **pediatrician's contact information**, a **picture ID** (driver's license or other ID), your **insurance card**, and an **emergency birth plan**, if you have one.

### **For your spouse or labor coach**

- A **camera** or **video camera** with **batteries**, **charger**, and **memory card** (or film or tape). Someone has to document the big event!
- Don't forget your **phone charger**!
- **Toiletries**
- **Comfortable shoes**
- **Something comfortable to sleep in** – Dads get tired during labor, too! So bring something to sleep like some comfortable shorts. You may curl up in bed with Mom but we will be coming in often to check on mom and baby.
- a change of **comfortable clothes**
- **Your own pillow** (if you prefer) and please use a colored or printed pillow case.
- **Money** for food (or in the event of a transport, you would also want **change** for vending machines)
- A **bathing suit**. This is required if you want your spouse or labor coach to take a bath or shower with you during labor. Some women find it helpful to have a support person in the water with them and some couples like being together in the birth tub. The choice is yours. But we do ask that your spouse or labor coach wear a swim suit if they get in the shower or pool with you.

### **The “After Baby Arrives” Bag:**

#### *For yourself:*

- A fresh **nightgown**, for the few hours after the birth that you will be resting in bed at the birth center.
- A **list of people to call and their phone numbers**, your **cell phone** and **charger** or, if you'll be using the birth center phone, a **prepaid phone card**. (We do not have long distance service.) After your baby's born, you will 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.
- A **good nursing bra**. You will need a good nursing bra to wear home after the baby is born. You probably won't need pads the first day but may want to have some at home waiting for you to use in the next day or so.
- **Going Home Clothes** – Think “weather appropriate, comfortable, easy to put on and easy to nurse”. Bring something roomy and easy to get into (for the first day or so, you'll probably still look 5 or 6 months pregnant) and a pair of flat, comfortable shoes.

#### *For your baby:*

- An **installed car seat**. You can't drive your baby home without one! Have the seat properly installed ahead of time and know how to buckle your baby in correctly.
- A **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 even if the weather is warm. Make sure the legs on your baby's clothes are separate so the car seat strap can fit between them.
- A **receiving blanket**. The birth center will provide blankets for your baby while you're there, but you may want to bring your own for pictures and to tuck around your baby in the car seat for the ride home. Bring several or a heavy one if the weather's cold.

### *Optional:*

- **Gifts for older siblings.** (optional) Some parents bring gifts for the new baby to "give" to big brothers and sisters.
- **A notepad or journal and pen or pencil.** (optional) Track your baby's feeding sessions, 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 and get foot prints done.

### **What NOT to bring**

- **Jewelry**
- Large amounts of **cash** or **other valuables**
- **Diapers.** We will provide diapers for your baby while you're there. Leave your supply at home. We recommend you NOT open any packages until after your baby is born. Some babies are born too big for the "newborn" size or don't wear them for long. You can always return any unopened packages if you don't use them.
- A **breast pump.** If you end up needing a breast pump for any reason, we can provide one.
- **Unsupervised Children** – Children are welcome at the birth center but we cannot provide supervision and you and your spouse will be too busy to attend to their needs. We also have limited space. So please keep this in mind when making plans for your children. We ask that you have a responsible adult with them at all times if they are at the birth center during your labor or birth. Your children (and other family members) also need to have another place to go if their presence becomes a distraction to your labor or if they need to sleep (we don't have sleeping facilities for family other than your spouse). Also, if we ever have two women in labor at the same time at the center, we will request that your guests limit their visits to after the baby is birth.