

Packing Your Bags...

There is a tendency to over pack for a hospital or birth center birth, the key is to examine everything you need carefully and ask yourself why it is important and if you can live without it. Keeping things to a minimum will help ease the stress of coming home. Remember, anything you pack will eventually need to be unpacked, and you will leave with more than you came with – including your baby!

Here is a basic list of essentials to pack for your birth away from home:

- Car seat for baby – Can't bring baby home without it! Install it before you are full term.
- One or two pillows
- Insurance information and any paperwork you will need as well as a copy of your birth plan.
- Labor Food: The hospital will not give mom food to eat – maybe not even water. Be sure to talk to your care provider about being allowed to eat and drink during labor. Bring foods that are easy to digest and provide you with protein and the nutrients you need to help you sustain labor. Bananas, honey sticks, granola, Labor Tea, miso soup or broth, etc. are all great examples.
- After Birth Foods: Nuts, Fruit, Trail Mixes, Postpartum Tea, etc.
- Clothes:
 - For the birth: Keep this simple. Wear something that you don't worry too much about. Tank tops, even bathing suit tops and free flowing skirts are nice and keep everything accessible.
 - For Postpartum: Comfort is key. A good nursing tank or nursing nightgown works well. Bring one or two pair of loose fitting yoga pants & roomy top to come home in.
 - One pair of clean underwear (you'll be wearing some fancy hospital fishnet ones during your stay) and a couple of pairs of socks.
 - Robe and slippers (optional – but nice to have)
- A focal point, good luck charm, or other reassuring item (any object that gives you strength)
- Oil/Lotion for massage (any comfort items)
- Music/Music Player
- Cord Blood Kit (if applicable)
- Anything you want baby's footprints on (baby book, art, etc.)
- Camera/Camcorder (remember the charger or extra batteries!)
- Cell phone/Laptop & Chargers
- List of numbers to call after the birth
- Eyeglasses or contacts and supplies
- Toiletries including; Lip balm, hair ties, shampoo/conditioner, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.
- Nursing Pads – It's great to have a few pairs of reusable nursing pads as well as disposable.
- Reading materials (Ina May's Guide To Breastfeeding/The Nursing Mothers Companion)
- Birthing Ball (these are usually provided, but bring and leave in the car “just in case”)
- For Baby:
 - Blanket and outfit to get pictures in and an outfit to come home in. Have 3 outfits with you.
 - Diaper Bag (diapers, wipes, comb/brush, baby nail clippers/nail file, natural lotion)
 - Organic bath wash for first bath