

## Preparing for Homebirth

Most of these items are things you already have on hand. Gather them up into one place- a box, basket or in the crib – by 37 weeks. It's much easier for us to set up for the birth when everything is ready and easy to find.

- Baby clothes, diapers and receiving blankets
  - 1 extra set of old, clean sheets/pillow cases
  - 4 (or more) towels – especially needed if you're planning to labor or give birth in the water
  - 3 or 4 pillows - helpful for getting comfortable during labor and for nursing/snuggling with your baby
  - Tall kitchen trash bags for pillows (optional) – helpful if you'd like to protect your pillows
  - Crock Pot – not necessary but very convenient for keeping warm compresses warm
  - Extension cord (for Crock Pot, which usually has a very short cord)
  - Hydrogen peroxide – works very well to clean up any blood
  - Vaseline for baby's bottom – helps keep the tarry first stool, meconium, from sticking to baby's tender skin
  - Overnight or super-size sanitary pads
  - Snacks and drinks for you and birth team
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- Wash all baby clothes, sheets, diapers, etc. with a mild soap or detergent and rinse well. This includes all packaged clothes.
  - Clean your house. Give special attention to your bathroom and bedroom. Remove unnecessary objects and clutter from the birthing room. Have a desk, table, dresser top or crib/bassinet clear for us to use for our equipment.
  - Bed making for labor: Put a clean set of sheets on the bed, lay a plastic sheet over it to protect your mattress then put another set of clean sheets on top of this protective covering. After the birth we will just pull the top set of sheets and plastic off, leaving your bed fresh and ready for you and your baby to rest and nest in.
  - Think about what you'll wear after the baby is born. Gown or pajamas that open down the front or lift easily for easy nursing are practical and comfortable. It can be depressing to have to wear maternity clothes after the birth so a couple of outfits which are one to three sizes larger than you normally wear are nice to have.
  - Buy several nursing bras. Be sure to be fitted properly by the sales person who is specially trained in fitting maternity and nursing bras.
  - Stock up on food! Make double recipes and freeze half for later. Stock up on easy-to-prepare food. Arrange for friends to bring dinner each night for the first week or two. Know the menus and phone numbers for your favorite takeout restaurants.
  - Keep your laundry caught up and your house in order.
  - Arrange for someone to assist with household chores for the first two weeks.
  - If you have older children, arrange for someone to take care of them during the birth. If you choose for them to be present at the birth, someone must be there to take care of their needs, answer their questions or to leave the room with them if they choose to do so. It should be someone with whom the child is comfortable, and also someone who is not attached to the idea of seeing the birth, in case the child decides to leave the birth scene. And finally, it should be someone who can take care of the child if a transport becomes necessary.
  - If you are having guests at your birth, please explain to them in advance that all invitations are conditional and depend on what is going on and how you feel when your labor begins. Explain that either you or your midwives might ask people to leave if the labor requires more privacy and that anyone invited must be supportive of this decision. Everyone should understand the flexibility of plans and know how to leave the scene gracefully. When you consider inviting someone for support, be certain that you both agree on the kind of support you are looking for.