

# 5 Things You Need for the Perfectly Packed Hospital Bag

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**“I’ve had my hospital bag packed for months!” my patient proudly exclaims to me.**

It’s almost a badge of honor and the stuff of movies—packing the perfect hospital bag and having it waiting and ready by the door.

**So what exactly should you pack in the hospital bag? Here are my labor and delivery nurse recommendations for packing the perfect hospital bag:**

*Image via Flickr/ [penelope waits](#)*



**Laptop or tablet.** If you are a first-time mom, labor can take some time. As in, 14-16 hours

time. And if you are being induced or plan on an epidural, your labor may be extended even longer. Some women actually find the early stages of labor, while uncomfortable, tolerable in terms of pain and find that they are actually a bit, well, *bored*. You might want to pass some time catching up on your favorite show or keeping your blog readers updated on your labor.

*Image via Flickr/ [thms.nl](#)*



**Snacks for your partner.** While you most likely will not be eating during labor, your partner will need to stay nourished and hydrated in order to provide you the best possible support. He or she may be too concerned to leave you to forage for food while you're in labor, so be sure to throw a few portable snacks into that bag – a granola or protein bar and some juice or Gatorade should do the trick. I've seen one too many dads just about hit the floor, so prevention is key! If you're anything like me, feel free to sneak a few treats for yourself in there for after the baby is born. Chocolate covered raisins, anyone?

*Image via Flickr/ [bigal\\_60714](#)*



**Shampoo and conditioner.** Just last week at work, I was helping a new mother up to the shower and asked her if she had brought any shampoo or conditioner she wanted me to set up for her. She looked at me blankly. “Oh,” she said. “I didn’t even think to bring that stuff — I was just thinking I was going to a hotel!” Unfortunately, a hospital is not a hotel. And while the nursing staff often chips in and provides their own shampoo and conditioner to patients, toiletry items aren’t usually part of the package – and if they are, they come at a price. Hospitals will bill you for every last thing you use, so if you have some extra hotel shampoos lying around, toss them into your bag, just in case.

*Image via Flickr/ [lindsay.dee.bunny](#)*



**Baby clothes and blankets.** This one might sound like a no-brainer, but a lot of people think that you can take the baby clothes and blankets that the hospital provides you with home. While I can't speak for every institution of course, I know that in our hospital, linens are not provided at discharge. Our hospital washes and reuses all the baby onesies and blankets, so it might get kind of difficult to replace them after each and every delivery. Plus, and I say this with all due respect for my profession, but you don't want to take hospital linens home – yours are much nicer.

*Image via Flickr/ [Rita H Cobbs](#)*



**A touch of home.** After I had my third child, my sister came to visit me in the hospital and brought me my very favorite scented lotion. I can't explain it, but slathering myself in that familiar and comfortable scent made me so happy. It was a small bit of pampering after a rather rough pregnancy and I will never forget how comforting it was to have a small touch of home with me in those whirlwind first few hours. When I think back to my son's newborn days, they are intermingled with the lovely scent of Moonlight Path. I encourage you to pack something small, whether it be your favorite pillow or blanket, or a scented lotion, to bring touch of home to your hospital stay.

**Did I miss anything? What would you recommend to pack for the hospital?**

*Image via Flickr/ [The Classy Kat](#)*

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## Author



### Chaunie Brusie, RN, BSN

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Chaunie Brusie is a coffee mug addict, a labor and delivery nurse turned freelance writer, and a young(ish) mom of four. She is the author of "Tiny Blue Lines: Preparing For Your Baby, Moving Forward In Faith, & Reclaiming Your Life In An Unplanned Pregnancy" and "The Moments That Made You A Mother". She also runs Passion Meets Practicality, a community of tips + inspiration for work-at-home mothers. ... [More](#)