

What to bring to the hospital

You're coming to the hospital to give birth.

You've had a hip replacement and now will have a hospital stay to complete rehabilitation.

There are a lot of things swirling through your mind, notably thoughts like "Am I going to be OK?"

Questions like "Where is my toothbrush?" are probably on the backburner. That's why it's a good idea to make a "hospital essential items" checklist now.

[Kurt Bloomstrand, MD](#), sees these scenarios plenty while providing care in the emergency department at OSF HealthCare. He says a hospital will provide basic toiletries, blankets, food and clothing like a gown and socks. But some people prefer their own toiletries, clothes and snacks.

Other things to do and bring:

- Write down your health information: health insurance, medications, medical history, name of your primary care provider, allergies and legal documents like power of attorney and a do not resuscitate order. Have an identification like a driver's license, too.

"Some people in the emergency department are not able to tell us their health information given what they're presenting for. So, it's so valuable to have basic health information written down," Dr. Bloomstrand says. He adds that knowing your health information allows providers to care for you properly. You can also bring legal forms to your provider anytime to be added to your medical record.

- Bring other items essential to your well-being: eyeglasses, contacts, hearing aids, dentures and a continuous positive airway pressure machine (CPAP) for sleeping. Bring cases and batteries for these items, too.
- When choosing clothes, opt for loose-fitting and short-sleeved garments.

"If you have an IV, a short-sleeved shirt is much better to access it than a long-sleeved shirt," Dr. Bloomstrand says. "You can bring a robe to cover up."

- For moms giving birth, bring your [birth plan](#) in written form. Pack a few pairs of clothes for you and your baby.

"Babies notoriously spit up on their clothes," Dr. Bloomstrand says with a smirk.

The hospital can provide diapers, wipes and a breast pump. But, you can bring your own if you prefer a certain type.

"Not only can you use your breast pump, the people at the hospital can [teach you how to use it](#)," Dr. Bloomstrand says.

What babies don't need at the hospital: rattles, books and toys. Save those memories for home.

- Don't overdo it with personal items and food. This can cause your room to get cluttered and create a trip hazard. Have someone who can take unneeded items home.
- Don't bring valuable items. Dr. Bloomstrand says a phone is OK to keep in touch with loved ones. But other electronics and jewelry should stay home. Hospitals have security, but like any other place, there is a chance for theft.