

Equipment for Babies

You may have seen huge lists of recommended items. You may be overwhelmed thinking you need “all that stuff” for a baby. Remember those lists are made by stores that want to sell you stuff, or by magazines and websites that want to sell ads to companies that sell stuff. Remember that humans survived for a long time without most of those items!

In this handout, we list “essentials”, “nice to have” items, and some optional frills. (The quantities are minimum amounts – you may have more.) You can also ask your friends, family, and co-workers for advice. Instead of purchasing new, check out kids’ [consignment stores](#), or get hand-me-downs from friends or from “buy nothing” groups. It’s easier on the wallet and on the environment. Babies tend not to wear anything out before they outgrow it. You can print this list, and as you get items, cross them off.

Feeding. Breast-Feeding / Chest-Feeding

Essential: A willing and able parent. A way to learn how to nurse (e.g. books, videos, websites). A list of lactation consultants, breastfeeding groups or phone hotlines to call for support if needed.

Nice to have: A breastfeeding class. Nursing pads (for leaking), bras you can nurse in (nursing bra or a soft cup bra you can pull aside to expose nipple), clothes you can nurse in (e.g. shirts you can lift up to uncover breast)

Extra frills: “Hooter hider” (or just use a blanket). A book (e.g. The Nursing Mother’s Companion) or favorite websites. (www.llli.org; www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding).

Not needed: Nursing pillow (boppy, my breastfriend, etc) These were more frequently recommended in the past when we were teaching more upright positions for nursing, but current trend is to use laidback breastfeeding, which either needs no pillows or you can use household pillows for. Soothies pads or Lansinoh cream – they’re not effective for sore nipples. Nipple shields (only buy if recommended by lactation consultant)

Pumping and Bottle-Feeding

Essential for bottle-feeding: Small bottles (4 or 5 ounces) – 3 or 4 if baby is primarily breast/chest fed, 6 – 8 if they are fully bottle fed. Buy one each of three brands, so you can test them and see which one baby likes best.

For pumping: choose a manual pump if you only need to pump about once or twice a day. Choose an electric pump for pumping multiple times a day and want to maximize your milk supply. You can rent a hospital grade pump, or buy an electric pump. Something to store milk in (e.g. breastmilk storage bags or glass jars).

Nice to have: Bottle brush for hand-washing bottles; dishwasher basket for small bits.

Frills: Bottle warmer – or just use a cup of warm water. Bra or bustier that holds the pumps for hands-free pumping – or make one by cutting slits in an old bra. Insulated bags and ice packs for transporting milk.

Hint: with breastmilk or formula, a typical baby consumes about 2.5 ounces per day per pound they weigh.

Solid Food Supplies: bowls, spoons, and high chair can wait. You won’t need those till 6 months.

Feeding the Parents

Before baby is born, stock up on foods that 1) you can eat with 1 hand while holding a baby, 2) don’t need to be prepped, 3) are good hot or cold, 4) don’t spoil when left out for a few hours, and 5) you like to eat.

Hygiene

Diapers:

Wash your own: You'll need 50 - 60 diapers, 6 covers, Bin for dirty diapers (Note: some online diaper companies let you rent a trial kit for a month.) Search online for great tips on washing your own.

Cloth Diaper Service: You should call to arrange service one month before due date: Buy 6 covers

Disposable: Have a 2 week supply (120 diapers) in stock before baby comes

Wipes: Washcloth & water? Or diaper wipes?

Trash Bin. Diaper rash ointment.

Changing table and pad? (Optional. Could just use folded towels on top of a counter.)

Diaper bag: includes small container of wipes, changing pad, bag for dirty diapers, bag for wet clothes. You can re-purpose a backpack, purse or tote bag you already own

Bathing and Hygiene

Baby bathtub? (Optional. Could just take baby in the bath or shower with you, or bathe in sink)

Towels and washcloths (you don't have to use special baby items, regular towels work fine), and a mild tear-free soap / shampoo

Baby nail clippers/scissors, cotton swabs for cleaning umbilical cord stump in first week

Bulb syringe or Nosefrida Snotsucker?

Sleep

Essential: Planned sleep location: crib, bassinet, co-sleeper, parent's bed. Knowledge of safer sleep practices: www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/sids; <https://cosleeping.nd.edu/safe-co-sleeping-guidelines/>

Nice to have: Waterproof mattress pad, and 3 sheets. 3 pajamas or sleep sacks (or baby could just sleep in a onesie, although onesies are not flame retardant). 3 light-weight receiving blankets for swaddling

Frills: white noise machine or some sort of lullaby music-player. Monitor? (You won't need one if you live in a small house or apartment and can easily hear noises between rooms.) For cloth diapering parents: plan to use a diaper liner or double-diaper (two diapers in the cover) for overnight.

Not recommended: bumpers, sleep positioners, pillows, thick comforters, stuffed animals for bed.

Clothes for Baby

How much you need of each item depends on the season. Summer babies can get by with onesies, a few sleepers, and some light receiving blankets. Winter babies may need more sleepers and warm outfits, plus a jacket, and a nice warm blanket for stroller rides or the car seat. How many clothes you need also depends on how often you want to do laundry: Expect a newborn to go through two to four outfits every day (due to spit-up, diaper blow-outs, etc.) If you expect to do laundry a couple times a week, that means 9 outfits could come in handy.

Hint: Parents often wonder how warmly to dress a baby. A general rule of thumb is to dress your baby like you're dressed, then add 1 layer – maybe a hat or a light blanket.

Here's a general suggestion for what to buy:

- Onesies (6+):
- Socks or Booties (3+):
- Outfits – one-pieces or pants/shirts (6+):
- Hats: 1 knit hat for a newborn and one that's appropriate for the season (warm hat for winter, sun hat for summer)
- Jacket or sweater (1):
- Laundry stain remover and mild, unscented detergent (doesn't need to be special baby detergent)

Safety, and Health

Car Seat Info: [nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats](https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats); [healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go) Buy a seat at least 1 month before due date. Practice installing the seat in car, and practice buckling a teddy bear into the seat, so you know how that works.

Do initial childproofing:

- Dispose of un-needed chemicals and hazardous items
- Get a gun safe and medicine safe if needed.
- Turn water heater down to 120°
- Take a baby safety class and/or first aid & CPR class.

Choose baby's doctor before the birth: _____

Choose a book or website you trust for health info.

Digital Thermometer and First Aid kit

Any other supplies your baby's doctor recommends,

Baby Hang-Outs and Transportation

Sling, Wrap (e.g. Moby Wrap), or front-pack

Stroller: frame that car seat clicks in to, or baby carriage, or smaller "umbrella" stroller. Optional.
(Note: it is not recommended to jog with a baby in a stroller until baby is able to support his or her head.)

Optional items: Bouncer?? ____ Swing?? ____ Jumper?? ____ Exersaucers?? ____ Playpen?? ____

Toys, Fun, and Games

For the first several months of baby's life, their favorite activity is interacting with adults. Their favorite "toys" are any everyday object that is safe for them to look at, and to hold. We have seen babies have great fun with spoons, measuring cups, cardboard boxes, plastic containers waiting to be recycled, and so on.

When your baby reaches 3 – 4 months, some "teethers" – small toys that are easy to hold and safe to gnaw on.

For a baby 6 – 18 months, try to choose a wide variety of toys that help develop a variety of skills:

- Board books for language skills.
- Nesting / stacking cups and shape sorters to develop spatial awareness, and practice putting things in and taking them out.
- Music to listen to, musical instruments to play, and songs to learn together.

- Balls to throw; and things to climb on or into (cardboard box!) for developing big motor skills.
- Dolls and stuffed animals to practice nurturing.
- Scarves for peek-a-boo and “dress-up”.
- Most important is your attention – almost anything can be fun for a baby to play with and explore when their parent is by their side sharing the experience with them.
- Brain development is supported by 3 key things: Novelty (new experiences), Repetition (doing the same thing over and over till they master it), Down Time (quiet time and rest to process all the new learning).

Learn more about baby care and feeding in [Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn](#).