

Birth Preparedness Checklist

As you move toward your due date, being prepared will help you feel more relaxed and confident about becoming parents. Remember that your “due date” begins 2 weeks before your EDD, so it’s important to be ready!

4 WEEKS BEFORE EDD

- Pelvic rocks two or three times a day for 15 to 20 minutes each time to prevent back labor (see spinningbabies.com for more information)
- No squatting until baby’s head is engaged in your pelvis -- ask your caregiver if baby’s head is engaged!
- Increase your water intake. You should be drinking 1 oz of water for each ½ lb. of your weight. For example, if you weigh 160 lbs., you would need 80 oz of water per day. Fruits and vegetables are great sources of water -- the most waterlogged fruits and vegetables are watermelon, oranges, apples, cucumbers, iceberg lettuce, and tomatoes. Eating these will help with fluid retention and swelling, too! Dehydration can cause pre-term labor.

3 WEEKS BEFORE EDD

- Evening Primrose Oil (EPO) capsules by mouth WITH caregiver's approval*
- Bags packed (see What to Pack) - keep by front door with list of missing items attached
- Alternative route to hospital prepared in case of traffic problems
- Prepare two food baskets or bags (one each for the labor and postpartum nurses) (see Birth Plan Tips)
- Car seat installed properly (you can’t leave the hospital without it!)

2 WEEKS BEFORE EDD

- EPO capsules for perineal massage and vaginal suppository WITH caregiver's approval*
- Working phone card (cell phones are often not allowed in hospitals and your battery may die)

LEAVING FOR THE HOSPITAL -- EAT BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- Bags packed (separate bags for labor and postpartum)
- Ice chest, juice and snacks for mom and partner
- Insurance card and pre-admission paperwork
- Phone list and contraction timer filled out for hospital staff
- Two or more pillows with colorful pillowcases (not your best pillows or pillowcases)
- Towel and large sheet of plastic or trash bag in car (in case of rupture of membranes)
- Nurses’ baskets or bags
- Working phone card or lots of change for phone calls

* Evening Primrose Oil (EPO) contains essential fatty acids that our bodies use to make the same prostaglandins they would typically be making as labor gets near. Our typical American diet is often deficient in these fatty acids, so EPO is a dietary supplement, not a medicinal substance or a medical treatment. Some midwives recommend 1000 mg three times a day orally; others recommend taking about 500-1,000 mg orally per day. Some women insert a punctured capsule vaginally, during their last bathroom visit in the night (usually between 3:00 and 5:00 a.m.) beginning 10 to 14 days prior to due date and continuing until baby comes.