

Postpartum Toolkit: What You Really Need On Hand After Giving Birth

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So, you are having a baby. This is exciting! There is some bad news too...

The bad news is that postpartum recovery often blindsides women. We tend to be totally unprepared for what happens after we have a baby. For whatever reason, women are silent on the subject, even with their best friends. Whether it be postpartum afterpains or postpartum bleeding or simple baby care, new moms can be hit hard with the realities of postpartum.

The good news is, I want nothing more than to help you with this transition. Postpartum can be prepared for! Knowing what to expect from postpartum recovery is also hugely helpful.

Here is your postpartum toolkit: what you really need on hand after giving birth!

Frozen Meals

Looking back, I can't believe I didn't do this until my fourth child. Believe me, I know how overwhelming pregnancy can be, especially if you have other little kids running around. That being said, when I set my mind to preparing freezer meals, it was easy and a huge lifesaver.

How do you make freezer meals easy?

Simply double a recipe once a week for a month (or two) of your pregnancy. I would make recommendations, but we all have different favorites and dietary needs. My point is that you don't have to do anything fancy or anything different than what you normally do. No need to buy special books. Just double a recipe and freeze. If you have enough glassware (I love to be more eco friendly if I can), then freeze in those, if not, treat yourself to some disposable aluminum pans.

I chose to freeze stuffed bell peppers, Shepherd's pie, lasagna, soup, and enchiladas from meals I was making while pregnant. Purchasing a few things that are pre-made is also a

great option!

If you get meals brought in from friends, take them! Save the frozen meals. You will need them, maybe even a month later. Recovery is so much easier when you don't have to stress every evening!



An Extra Flat Sheet

Simple, yet super helpful for me! The first week after you give birth, lay a folded (in quarters) flat sheet on your side of the bed. This will soak up the excess blood, spit-up, leaked milk, and night sweats that happen postpartum.

Throw it in the wash in the morning and you will be saved the trouble of washing ALL your sheets and tearing apart the bed each morning after negligible newborn sleep.

Diapers...for You

Don't be ashamed. Diapers are for women postpartum, not just grandma or the baby!

One word – lochia. It's real. It's heavy. It leaks.

Big girl diapers are an instant fix. You don't need that many because the heaviest days of bleeding are only the first few. Go in for a box with a friend. They run big, so a small works for many.

If you are preparing for a home birth, there should be some different sized pads in your birth kit. If it doesn't have full sized diapers, get some. If you are planning a hospital birth, they will have something on hand for you while you are there, but I highly recommend having things at home like different sized pads and full sized diapers.

The last thing you need after giving birth is even more laundry. (Babies miraculously triple laundry all by themselves.)

Chocolate



For real, ladies. I swear it stopped the tears.

There will be haters who think chocolate is bad for you. But I figure, it's cheaper than therapy!

A Water Bottle



A super special water bottle is your friend. You thought you had to drink a lot of water during pregnancy? Think again!

Nursing is a literal suck on your resources. Drink, drink, drink. Plus, it helps make that first poo a little easier.

Chlorophyll

Did we mention that first poo?

Of course we did.

Never fear, it has no bones and it is usually soft. Chlorophyll can help with the softness as well as give you some added energy boost and replenishment that you probably need. I love the mint flavored kind. If chlorophyll doesn't do the trick, ask your care provider about stool softeners. They may be helpful even just psychologically for relaxing during the first bowel movement.

Yoga Pants and Comfy Shirts



Nightgown days are over – you need something you can pull up easily for breastfeeding.

I know we all want to look like we have it together, but it is actually advantageous to look like a mess after you have a baby. Some of my favorite advice is to stay in your jammies for three days. It makes people want to leave you alone and clean your toilet on the way out.

True story.

People say to, “sleep when baby sleeps,” and they are right. It’s easier to follow this sage advice if you aren’t wearing a bra or shoes!

Placenta Capsules

I know, it sounds nasty. And some people really feel it doesn’t help. It seemed like a *literal* lifesaver for me, so I have to put it out there. I never felt as sane after giving birth than I did the one time I consumed my placenta.

[Read this article on why it’s important.](#)

Breastfeeding Resources



Line up the books, lactation consultant phone numbers, local resources like [La Leche League](#), and good friends who are experienced at breastfeeding and don’t be afraid to reach out. Most new moms could benefit from breastfeeding resources and they exist! (Here is a comprehensive list of [breastfeeding resources for new moms](#)). Take advantage of them. Your doula or [childbirth educator](#) can help. Build your village!

[Here are some great articles to help.](#)

Postpartum Resources

I know, this doesn't fit in a box, but postpartum resources are a must have. Often our whole life changes with a baby – work, friends, our body – everything seems different. Having a group of women to talk to and to help lift you up makes an incredible difference. Prepare for this BEFORE the baby and it is so much easier! Find local mom groups, [online groups](#), friends or family to help.

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Don't be blindsided by postpartum. It can be a difficult time of life, but it is also pretty incredible. You have a tiny little baby who literally changes EVERY day. They will never be this small and dependent again. You will never have such a good excuse to sit around and watch TV or read a book.

Take advantage of it. It can feel like you are doing nothing, but in reality, you are growing a real human being AND recovering from one of life's most transformational events. This is a miracle and it takes lots of effort, time, and energy both emotional and physical.

Be kind to yourself and it will pay off in a quicker recovery.

You deserve it.

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