

What You'll Need Before Bringing Baby Home

Infant Checklist

Winnie the Pooh crib sets, mechanical baby swings and television nursery monitors may be nice, but what are the essential items you'll need to make your new baby feel right at home?

The staff at University's W.G. Watson, M.D., Women's Center suggest parents-to-be equip their homes with the following items before the big day.

Infant car seat. Federal law requires that babies under 20 pounds and one year of age be buckled in a rear-facing child safety seat when riding in a car. So you'll need a car seat before you take the baby home. You may select one of two kinds: infant or convertible car seats. Infant seats are contoured especially for babies weighing up to 20 pounds. Convertible car seats are designed to face backwards until the child weighs 20 pounds. They can then be switched to face forward to provide several years of service. Be sure to get familiar with your baby's car seat in advance so that you are ready for babies' first ride!

Breast pump or formula and bottles. Experts recommend mothers breast-feed their babies. One of the center's lactation counselors is available for questions and help with problems. They can also arrange outpatient visits.

A breast pump and bottles will allow you to express breast milk and build up a reserve for later feedings.

If you plan to feed your baby formula, be sure to have a two-week supply on

hand. Talk to your pediatrician about the best type of formula for your baby. You'll also need six to eight bottles and nipples and a bottle brush.

Diapers, supplies and a diaper changing station. You may need to change your infant as many as 10 times a day, so it's a good idea to have about 200 newborn diapers on hand. You'll also need diaper rash ointment and rubbing alcohol and cotton balls for the belly button area.

You can change the baby on any flat surface, but a changing station makes the job easier. Make sure elevated surfaces are stable with high sides or a security belt. Keep diapers and supplies within easy reach.

Crib, mattress and bedding. Your baby will spend lots of time snoozing, so look for a safe, comfortable bed. Any new crib bought in the United States should meet current safety standards. Look for a certification sticker from the Juvenile Product Manufacturer's Association (JPMA) confirming that the crib meets voluntary industry standards when new. If you buy a used crib, especially those made before the 1970s, make sure:

- The crib does not have corner posts greater than 1/16 inches high.
- The slats are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.
- It has no headboard or footboard cutouts.

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Be sure to select your Pediatrician in advance and get to know him or her. He or she will be a great resource for you and your new family.

- It has a drop side with a lock, sturdy mattress support and no splinters, chipped paint or exposed metal edges.
- The mattress fits snugly, with an area less than two fingers between it and the crib, so the baby can't get trapped and suffocate.

You'll also need two or three fitted sheets and waterproof mattress pads, a bumper pad and three or four receiving blankets.

Baby bathtub and supplies.

Newborns only need a sponge bath once or twice a week until the belly button heals. After that, specially designed baby tubs or bathing sponges that fit inside sinks and bathtubs make bathing easier. You will also need a mild soap with no perfumes or additives and two or three washcloths and hooded baby towels. You may wash your infant's hair with soap or a shampoo formulated for babies.

Stroller or carriage. Many new parents opt for car-seat strollers, because they are multi-functional. The unit that holds the baby snaps into the base of both the car seat and the stroller. Others select carriage-stroller combos. They are sturdy and recline, making them ideal for newborns. But they can be bulky. While lightweight umbrella strollers are compact and easy to use, they don't offer the support newborns need. They are not recommended for babies under six months.

Baby carrier. These come in two basic options: backpacks or slings. Slings are preferable for newborns, who need firm neck and head support. They free up your hands, and many

babies enjoy the rocking motion they provide. Metal-famed backpack carriers offer less support. They are not appropriate for children younger than six months.

Clothing. Look for soft outfits made of 100 percent cotton that snap up the front and along the legs for easy diapering. You'll need:

- four to six cotton T-shirts
- three or four coveralls
- three to five footed sleepers
- two or three pairs of baby booties
- one sweater and a hooded sweatshirt or jacket, depending on the climate
- two or three terry cloth bibs
- two newborn hats

In addition to these items, you'll need good prenatal care, a reliable source of information on pregnancy and child care and an excellent maternity facility. University's Women's Center provides all that and much more in a bright and cheerful setting. If there's a baby in your future, why not visit the Women's Center and see for yourself why more local families choose it than any other area facility. For a tour of the center, call 706/774-2825.

Celebrations! It's what we are all about. Whatever phase of life you are celebrating and especially if you are expecting or have just delivered a baby, we have many products to help you celebrate and meet your special needs. The *Celebrations!* Gift Shop is located on the atrium in the Women's Center. Hours vary, so be sure to check in with them. For maternity bra fittings, call 706/774-2211. ✦

Want to Prepare for Parenthood?

The staff of University's Women's Center can help. The center combines the latest technology with specialized care to make every birth a special delivery. What's more, its Great Expectations Society offers helpful information, tours and a variety of classes for parents, grandparents and siblings-to-be.

When the big day arrives, all suites are equipped with family-oriented touches. There's even a Women's operating suite for Caesareans and a Level III Special Care Nursery for premature infants or babies with special needs conveniently located within the Women's Center.

To tour the Women's Center, call 706/774-2825. For a virtual glimpse, log on to www.universityhealth.org/women.