

# What to get ready for your birth experience

**This list was created by Reading Maternity Voices (MVP) service user representatives for Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire with input from parents. If you have any questions then please speak to your community midwife.**

## Early labour at home – self-help ideas to help cope with early labour

Early labour, also known as the *latent phase*, can last from a few hours to several days. Listed below are some self-help items that you might like to prepare at home ahead of time, to help you cope with this important stage of your labour.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paracetamol (2 tablets every 4-6 hours, max 4 doses)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> TENS machine</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Exercise ball</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Energy sweets / drinks / snacks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hot water bottle &amp; cover / heat pack</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Massage oil</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Music play list – for relaxation &amp; distraction</li> </ul>	
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## Other items useful to have available

### For a home birth:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth preferences</li> <li>• Maternity notes</li> <li>• TENS machine</li> <li>• Pillows</li> <li>• Create a calm birthing area at home – consider dim lighting, fairy lights, relaxing scents and music</li> <li>• Drinks (flat energy drinks or water)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straws for easy drinking</li> <li>• Snacks for during labour (slow release energy foods such as cereal bars, bananas, oat biscuits)</li> <li>• Refreshing ice cubes or cubes of fruit (e.g. mango) in the freezer for crunching on</li> <li>• Tissues</li> <li>• Electric candles</li> <li>• Lip balm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headphones, earplugs, and eye mask to enable effective rest periods</li> <li>• Pen and notebook</li> <li>• MP3/phone with music and speakers or CDs</li> <li>• Phones and chargers</li> <li>• Camera and charger</li> <li>• Comedy shows / films on tablet</li> <li>• Birth pool</li> </ul>
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### For a home birth (continued):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books / audiobook / magazines</li> <li>• Hypnosis tracks/CDs</li> <li>• Birth ball</li> <li>• Cooling gel packs</li> <li>• Flannels</li> <li>• Hand held fan</li> <li>• Comfortable clothes to labour in (does not need to be nightwear)</li> <li>• Hot water bottle</li> <li>• Microwaveable wheat bag</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand cream</li> <li>• Massage oil</li> <li>• Hairband to tie up hair</li> <li>• Old towels/sheets</li> <li>• Disposable change mats</li> <li>• Ground sheet or polythene dust sheet with an old duvet or blanket on top for comfort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New liner for birth pool</li> <li>• Filling and emptying kit for birth pool</li> <li>• Swimwear for use in the birthing pool</li> <li>• Swimwear for birthing companion in case they want to go in the pool with you</li> <li>• Mirror for use under water</li> <li>• Torch for use if lighting is dimmed</li> </ul>
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### For a hospital birth:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth preferences</li> <li>• Maternity notes</li> <li>• TENS machine</li> <li>• Pillows or a pillow case to put on a hospital pillow for comfort</li> <li>• Own small comforting blanket</li> <li>• Comfortable clothes to labour in (does not need to be nightwear)</li> <li>• Drinks during labour (flat energy drinks or water)</li> <li>• Straws for easy drinking</li> <li>• Snacks for labour (slow release energy foods such as cereal bars, bananas, oat biscuits)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headphones, earplugs, eye mask to enable effective rest periods</li> <li>• Pen and notebook</li> <li>• MP3 / phone with music and speakers or CDs*</li> <li>• Phones and chargers</li> <li>• Camera and charger</li> <li>• Books / audiobook / magazines</li> <li>• Comedy shows/films on tablet</li> <li>• Hypnosis tracks/CDs*</li> <li>• Electric candles</li> <li>• Your own birth ball*, unless you are happy to use one provided for you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooling gel packs</li> <li>• Flannels</li> <li>• Hand held fan for keeping cool</li> <li>• Hot water bottle</li> <li>• Microwaveable wheat bag</li> <li>• Tissues</li> <li>• Lip balm</li> <li>• Hand cream</li> <li>• Massage oil</li> <li>• Hairband to tie up hair</li> <li>• Comforting photo</li> <li>• Swimwear for use in the birthing pool</li> </ul>
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*\*Both the Obstetric Unit and Rushey Midwifery-Led Unit have birthing balls available to use, and also a variety of aromatherapy oils available. Any items brought into the hospital are done so at your own risk and RBFT cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or theft.*

### For birth partner

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items to freshen up with toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, a change of top.</li> </ul>
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## For after birth – mum

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternity pads (like sanitary pads but more absorbent)</li> <li>• Dressing gown (dark coloured)</li> <li>• Comfy clothes or nightwear (dark coloured)</li> <li>• Comfortable knickers (dark coloured)</li> <li>• Tops with easy access for baby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slippers</li> <li>• Socks</li> <li>• Breast pads</li> <li>• Nursing bras</li> <li>• Toiletries</li> <li>• Tissues</li> <li>• Soft, dark-coloured towels (small and large)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toothbrush and toothpaste</li> <li>• Hairbrush</li> <li>• Earplugs</li> <li>• Money</li> <li>• Useful telephone numbers (breastfeeding support, family, friends, doula)</li> </ul>
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## For after birth – baby

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frozen colostrum, if you have expressed this in pregnancy</li> <li>• If you are planning to formula feed your baby, please bring formula milk bottles, teats and sterilising equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nappies</li> <li>• Cardigan/s</li> <li>• Sleep suits</li> <li>• Vests</li> <li>• Blankets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft towels</li> <li>• Muslins</li> <li>• Bibs</li> <li>• Hat for leaving hospital</li> </ul>
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## Taking baby home – important please read\*\*

- Warm clothes for baby
- Sling or baby carrier if walking
- Car seat if driving

*\*\*Remember to make sure you know how to fit your car seat safely into your car. Try it out at home in advance. Hospital staff can help you put baby into the seat, but are not trained in car seat fitting and so cannot help with that.*

## Further information

See [www.readingmaternityvoices.org.uk](http://www.readingmaternityvoices.org.uk) for more info and how you can get involved.

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Matron for CMW & Rushey, MVP Service user reps, November 2016

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