

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.



**Reading
Maternity
Voices**
Reading, Wokingham
& West Berkshire

Early labour at home

- birth preferences
- maternity notes
- MP3/phone with music and speakers or CDs
- drinks (flat energy drinks or water)
- straws for easy drinking
- snacks for during labour (slow release energy foods such as cereal bars, bananas, oat biscuits)
- refreshing ice cubes or cubes of fruit (e.g. mango) in the freezer for crunching on
- head phones, earplugs, and eye mask to enable effective rest periods
- pen and notebook
- phones and chargers
- camera and charger
- books/audiobook/magazines
- hypnosis tracks/CDs
- birth ball
- comedy shows/films on tablet
- TENS machine
- cooling gel packs
- flannels
- hand held fan for keeping cool
- comfortable clothes to labour in (does not need to be nightwear)
- hot water bottle
- microwaveable wheat bag
- tissues
- electric candles
- lip balm
- hand cream
- massage oil
- hairband to tie up hair
- old towels
- sheet

For a home birth:

- birth preferences
- maternity notes
- pillows
- Create a calm birthing area at home - consider dim lighting, fairy lights, relaxing scents and music
- MP3/phone with music and speakers or CDs
- drinks (flat energy drinks or water)
- straws for easy drinking

- snacks for during labour (slow release energy foods such as cereal bars, bananas, oat biscuits)
- refreshing ice cubes or cubes of fruit (e.g. mango) in the freezer for crunching on
- head phones, earplugs, and eye mask to enable effective rest periods
- pen and notebook
- phones and chargers
- camera and charger
- books/audiobook/magazines
- hypnosis tracks/CDs
- birth ball
- comedy shows/films on tablet
- TENS machine
- cooling gel packs
- flannels
- hand held fan for keeping cool
- comfortable clothes to labour in (does not need to be nightwear)
- hot water bottle
- microwaveable wheat bag
- tissues
- electric candles
- lip balm
- hand cream
- massage oil
- hairband to tie up hair
- old towels/sheets
- disposable change mats
- ground sheet or polythene dust sheet with an old duvet or blanket on top for comfort
- birth pool
- new liner for birth pool
- filling and emptying kit for birth pool
- swimwear for use in the birthing pool
- swimwear for birthing companion in case they want to go in the pool with you
- mirror for use under water
- torch for use if lighting is dimmed

For a hospital birth:

- birth preferences
- maternity notes
- pillows or a pillow case to put on a hospital pillow for comfort
- MP3/phone with music and speakers or CDs*
- drinks during labour (flat energy drinks or water)
- straws for easy drinking
- snacks for labour (slow release energy foods such as cereal bars, bananas, oat biscuits)
- head phones, earplugs, eye mask to enable effective rest periods
- pen and notebook
- phones and chargers
- camera and charger
- books/audiobook/magazines
- hypnosis tracks/CDs*
- TENS machine
- your own birth ball*, unless you are happy to use one provided for you
- comedy shows/films on tablet
- cooling gel packs
- flannels
- hand held fan for keeping cool
- comfortable clothes to labour in (does not need to be nightwear)
- hot water bottle
- microwaveable wheat bag
- tissues
- electric candles
- own small comforting blanket
- lip balm
- hand cream
- massage oil
- hairband to tie up hair
- aromatherapy oils*
- comforting photo
- swimwear for use in the birthing pool

**Both the Obstetric Unit & 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

- Items to freshen up with toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, a change of top.

For after birth – for mum

- maternity pads (like sanitary pads but more absorbent)
- dressing gown (dark coloured)
- comfy clothes or nightwear (dark coloured)
- comfortable knickers (dark coloured)
- tops with easy access for baby
- slippers
- socks
- breast pads
- nursing bras
- toiletries
- tissues
- soft, dark-coloured towels (small and large)
- toothbrush and toothpaste
- hairbrush
- earplugs
- money
- useful telephone numbers (breastfeeding support, family, friends, doula)

For after birth – for baby

- Frozen colostrum if you have expressed this in pregnancy
- If you are planning to formula feed your baby please bring formula milk bottles, teats and sterilising equipment.
- nappies
- cardigan/s
- sleep suits
- vests
- blankets
- soft towels
- muslins
- bibs
- hat for leaving hospital

To take baby home

- car seat if driving
- sling or baby carrier if walking
- warm clothes for baby

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Further information

See www.readingmslc.org.uk for more info and how you can get involved.

More information is available on the Trust website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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Approved: Mat Information Group & Patient Info Manager, December 2018
Reviewed: December 2018 (K McPherson/ E Taylor (MVP))
Review due: December 2020