Episode Introduction

So to recap, the clothing that you need during pregnancy, labor, and the postpartum period is all different because it all has different functions. So we talk through all of those kind of things and then also a list of what to bring in the hospital bag.

But remember that whole list is in The Baby Manual. Hi, you're listening to season four of the Baby Manual Podcast, the podcast that helps new parents all over the world navigate the everyday challenges that arise when you have a young baby.

This season will help you decide which pregnancy, baby, and toddler items you actually need and which ones are a waste of time and money. I'm pulling on the knowledge of hundreds of thousands of new parents around the world, other pediatricians, doctor moms, the Academy of Pediatrics, breaking pediatric news sites, all to give you the best information and recommendations that I can, because I know how overwhelming it can be.

I am your host, a pediatrician, mom, and author, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello, welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual podcast. Today we're going to be talking about things that mom should have for herself.

So this is during pregnancy, for labor, in the postpartum period. And then at the end, I'm going tell you what to bring in hospital bag when you're in labor and about to have your baby.

All right, here we go. So for pregnancy related items for mom, if you are still pregnant, you're going to want to get some new bras. I know that when I was pregnant my bra size went up two cup sizes and two sizes around as well.

Your breasts will get bigger.

Pregnancy Clothing Essentials

That's one of the first things that you notice changing and you might need to buy a couple of new bras as your pregnancy goes on. And then also afterwards, especially if you're breastfeeding, your breasts are going to get even bigger then.

So just remember that you don't want to buy a whole set of new bra. You might just want one or two to go through this current size because it might still change as pregnancy go on, but you do want ones that are really nice and comfortable and have some good support and are, you know, have decently wide straps to help with your back as well so you can get back pain.

In terms of shirts, I found that maternity clothing, the shirts especially, are really great at being flattering while also not showing too much of your breasts now that they are bigger and also kind of minimizing the belly area so that the bump is not as obvious.

So I really like the materny clothing. Even when I wasn't pregnant, found myself shopping in that section because those clothes just kind fit and feel really comfortable.

But yeah, the maternity shirts, I feel like, are ones that you'll probably want to get somewhere around the first or second trimester. And then by the time you get to the third trimaster, you're definitely going to need them.

So in terms of seasons and seasonality of your pregnancy, just keep in mind long-sleeved shirts versus short-sleeve shirts. Sweaters, jackets, that kind of thing.

In terms of pants, so for pregnancy pants there's two main types. There are ones that have a band of fabric around the waist that goes all the way up to underneath the bra line and covers your whole belly.

And then there is a second style that sits underneath, the baby bump. So it goes kind of low down over across your hips. Both of those have stretchy waists.

I would suggest trying on both kinds of pants before deciding if you like one better than the other or if want to get a little bit of both. With the ones that have the wider band that goes all the way up, I found those stay up better.

They felt to me like they were really kind of like hugging my body better and staying on and I didn't have to worry about my underwear showing if I bent over or squatted down on the ground or sat in a chair.

And the lower ones I found that could sometimes be a little bit of an issue, but the ones that go over your whole belly are a bit warmer. So if it's summer, I find those hard when I was pregnant during the summer to wear those because it was just too hot.

But really great for in the winter. Things that you don't really need in terms of pregnancy clothes, you can just get bigger pajamas. They're pajamas, nobody sees them.

You just need a size or two bigger. You don't necessarily need a pregnancy swimsuit. If you wear a two-piece swimsuits, you don' t need it pregnancy swim suit because your belly is between the two pieces.

if you want a one- piece swims then yeah you probably will want one for the third trimester of pregnancy and again go with the seasons you know if it's that time of year that you might be swimming then you may want.

And in terms of dresses, so for things like comfortable summer dresses ones that are made out of like t-shirt material that is stretchy and soft, those are great.

You can just get like regular dresses that size are too bigger than you would normally wear or a few sizes bigger towards the end of pregnancy. But in term of fancy dresses if you're going to an event you might want to get a maternity dress.

There are groups online on Facebook, like buy nothing groups, local groups. You can see if anybody has any. Maternity dresses are something that are pretty expensive.

And usually you only wear it like once, maybe twice, and then you're the wrong size for it. So they're not terribly useful. It's really good to find one that is secondhand, if you can, has been passed around.

There's also second-hand kid stores all over the place. for child items like clothing and stuff. And I would suggest looking there as well for maternity clothes.

They usually have a couple of things. You also may or may not need new shoes when you are pregnant. Your going to gain weight, you're going need really good arch support.

So make sure that your feet are very comfortable at all times. Do you wanna wear flats because your joints get looser in pregnancy and you more likely to roll your ankle if you wearing high heels.

But if you are already wearing comfortable flat shoes, you may not need to get any new ones. You might need size up. And some of that could be due to swelling during pregnancy, which is normal.

Also, some people have told me that their feet grew a size when they were pregnant and it never went back down. Yeah, I think I went up a half a siz when I was pregnant, so it can happen.

So yeah, you may or may not need shoes. You don't need new regular socks, but you can get compression socks for pregnancy as well. If you tend to get swollen, compression stocks can be really good for when you're at work, if you are doing a lot of sitting, or if your going to take an airplane flight or something like that.

The socks are great. Alright, now when your in labor. Quick caveat, you don't really need anything special for when

you're in labor because you are going to get to the hospital, they're going give you a hospital gown, those socks that have the rubber on the bottom, and that's it.

So you do not necessarily have to bring anything. But there is something called the Lila labor gown. They have actually a few different styles. I'll put a link in the show notes for this.

This labor gown, I loved it. It has snaps that go along the sleeves, so easy access for nurses if they need to do things like blood pressure checks or check your IV.

There was a low back so that they could put an epidural while you were still dressed, which was awesome, but it covers your butt so your butts not hanging out like with the hospital gowns.

If you get too hot, you can air out and also you take out a breast for breastfeeding and then snaps that also go down the middle of the chest. So it's like really accessible, buttery soft material.

It's so nice, so comfortable. That made my labor, I feel like a little nicer when I had that versus when i was in the hospital gown the other time. But also, you're having a baby.

I mean, it's, your gonna be uncomfortable and you might really not care that much about what you are wearing and your probably going to get blood on whatever is there.

Uh, I don't know if anyone's told you yet, but when babies are born there's always some blood that comes out because when the placenta separates there is blood and that gets on your clothes.

So I would say don' bring your favorite thing if it might get stained. You might want to bring some slippers to the hospital.

Labor Day Clothing and Comfort Items

My favorite slippers are the Crocs slippers that have the fur inside. I know they're not pretty, but they are rubber and they a nice hard rubber, so they have good grip on most floors.

And if you stub your toe in them, you don't get hurt. So that's why I like those ones specifically. Also, they slip on. You don' have to bend down to put it onto your foot.

Yeah, so that's kind of everything I look for in a slipper, I guess, is that it's not going to slide around on the floor, that I can just slide my foot in and out of it really easily, but then it won't fall off while I'm walking and that protects my toes.

So the Crocs ones are my very favorite for that. Incidentally, those are made in my hometown of Boulder, Colorado. Shout out. All right, for postpartum stuff.

Something that I thought was really surprising when I first had my baby, but I heard about it on all of my doctor groups online, was bring in Depends to the hospital.

And I though they were joking. But Depend, like the underwear, the disposable underwear that is absorbent, is actually pretty amazing when you've had a baby.

Because like I said, there is bleeding and you're bleeding for usually several weeks after your baby is born. But for at least the first couple of days, right after giving birth, your body's really tired and it's kind of hard to move around and you need something that really has good coverage that you're not going to like lay sideways and leak out.

So Depends are really great for that. If you're not into that, you could also do something like overnight pads, like some really big ones. You don't have to bring any of this because the hospital will give you disposable underwear and pads that go inside, but the pads they give are usually pretty thick.

They kind of feel like you have a pillow in your pants. So if you some pads you like or you want to do disposable undies, those are great. Also, period underwear are nice because those are basically regular underwear, like two layers of underwear with a layer of plastic material in between that doesn't allow any liquid to go through.

So those were great for catching spillovers. If you want to do overnight pads, you can put them in those period undies. Those are great too. With the period Undies, I looked into a bunch of different brands of these and I've tried three different ones on Amazon.

I'll link my favorite one for you guys because some of them I found held up better than others. Some of the more stretchy enough and weren't comfortable and some got really smelly when I use them and others didn't.

So I will link the ones that I like down below. Sweatpants or dresses are also really helpful for postpartum because your, again, body is recovering and it's just real easy to slip in and out of those sweatpants, or, you know, to put a dress on so that you can go to the bathroom and not have to be moving a lot, bending a lots, that kind of thing.

Your whole body gets sore after having a baby. It's normal. I was surprised to find out my first time that my regular clothes didn't fit immediately after giving birth and realized that, of course not, you know, because when you're pregnant, and you gain weight in your whole body, it's not just in you uterus.

It's really your body that puts on weight because your entire body is getting ready to feed a baby for a year out of its own resources. So it needs to do that.

Your pregnancy pants are probably still going to fit when your leaving the hospital. You might want to take some from like the middle of pregnancy because you're not going to be quite as big as you were at the end, but close to that.

Postpartum Clothing and Recovery Wear

Yeah, if you have just some nice like stretchy sweatpants or a dress that you can throw over and you don't have to worry so much about the size and then there's nothing like clinging against your belly.

Also, If you've had a C-section, a Dress is going be a bit more comfortable as well because anything that lays across the C section scar is really uncomfortable.

So yeah, I would suggest bringing that for the postpartum period in the hospital. And what you don't need necessarily for post partum is, like I said, your pre-pregnancy clothing just because it's not going to fit.

So I For mental health reasons put it into a box, put into storage, label it pre-pregnancy, and then as soon as your maternity clothes are starting to feel loose on you and they no longer fit, then you can open that box again and pull those pre pregnancy clothes back out and see what still fits.

But you don't need to try to fit into those in the immediate postpartum period. It took nine months to grow this baby and for your body to change. it's going to take at least that long for it to go back to how it was before that.

So give yourself some grace and yeah, hang on to those clothes, but don"t try and put them on yet. Also your bras from before pregnancy, they're definitely not going fit, so hang onto them.

But yeah don' t try them yet All right, bring in the hospital bag. So I hear this question all the time online. Like, what should I bring when I go to the hospitals?

What do I need to pack in my bag? what kind of stuff do i absolutely need? The short answer is the hospital has everything that you could need, but there are some things that might make it extra nice.

So those kinds of things I would suggest. For mom, I'd say outfits that have access to your breasts. I didn't realize this the first time, if you're planning on breastfeeding, you need to be able to get your breast out of your clothing

fairly easily.

So a breastfeeding tank top, a breath feeding bra, breast feeding t-shirt, these are all good to have with you in the hospital because you're going to use them.

And I mean, or else you can be in a hospital gown, you know, that's okay as well. It just doesn't cover as much. So the breast-feeding tops are really nice because can stay mostly covered and have some privacy but then still feed your baby.

Nipple cream, they do have this at the hospital too, but if you have a special brand you like, nipple is like chapstick for your breasts. You know how when you lick your lips too much and they get dry and the kind of burn?

So the same thing is going to happen to your nipples. It's the kind of skin, and your nibbles are not used to being sucked on 15 or 20 times a day by babies.

So they're going get sore. They're gonna get chapped. And nipple cream is a lifesaver. Find one that just sounds good to you. There all pretty good. The mother love one is one I especially like.

But yeah, they are pretty much all good! Breast pump. If you're going to use a breast pump, you should bring it with you to the hospital because the nurses there can teach you how to set it up, how you use it, walk you through it.

They're not super hard. Once you've done it once, like you get it but it's really nice to have help setting it out the first time because it is not, some are more intuitive than others but a lot are not very intuitive.

If you're doing a regular breast pump that has those kind of trumpet-shaped flanges that come out, you gonna want a hands-free pumping bra to hold it in place because your arms will get very tired trying to that those pumps in-place.

And you are gonna get a lot more with the pumping-bra because it provides a little bit of pressure against the breast. So it kinda holds those pump right in the place but in like strong enough that it's also causing more milk to come out.

So I definitely recommend getting a hands-free pumping bra. I'll link one of those two. It doesn't look like a regular bra, the one that I like, it just goes around your body, so you don't have to take off all of your clothes, put that on, pump, and then take that off again in all your of clothes and put on a different bra because the pumping bras have holes over the nipples.

You can't wear them as regular bras. The one just around the body is the ones to get. And you need one with a clasp on it and a zipper. Bring those pads or Depends with you.

Bring your phone and charger, maybe a computer and a charger if you want, or something, a tablet, something to pass the time. Maybe a book, knitting, whatever you'd like to do to past the times.

Some hard candies to suck on while you're in labor. If you like candies, I would suggest bringing some. The reason I suggest hard candy is because sometimes they won't let you eat when you are in the labor because there's a chance that you might have a c-section and with a surgery you can't eat because it's risky.

You have to be fasting for at least eight hours before surgery. So a lot of hospitals won't let you eat during labor, but candies are okay because they'll give you a little bit of sugar and you feel like you got something at last.

You are going to have an IV the whole time, so like, you're getting your fluids and your salt and sugar that you actually need. But it's nice to a have a lil' something in your mouth also, just to taste better.

And then also, you're going to want high-protein snacks for after your baby is born. As soon as that baby comes out, every mom wants protein. All you want is you are going want like meat, or protein bars, protein powder, like

just protein, high protein high fat for immediately after delivery will help your body kind of replenish what you just lost.

Also, a water bottle if you have one that you like. The hospitals all give you a bottle, but if it's your own, you can bring that. And then your slippers or socks.

Remember, if your wearing socks while your baby's born, they might get ruined. A list of your regular medications.

Hospital Bag Checklist for Mom and Baby

If you had a picture of the bottles or could bring the bottle in, that's even more helpful for your medical team because then they can give those same medications at the hospital.

You're not allowed to take your own medicines that you brought in yourself. So the purpose of bringing them in is just to show them what you have. You could just take a picture or write a list, but make sure you know the dosing and how many times per day that your supposed to get them.

Bring a toiletry bag. I feel like the best shower of my entire life was after having all of my kids, each of kids. Because it's just, oh man, you're in labor for so long, and you get so sweaty.

It's a serious workout. And then afterwards, do you this nice hot shower? And just having some of own toiletries, like my shampoo that I like, then my face cream that like was really nice to have in the hospital.

And then also, I suggest bringing a copy of my book, The Baby Manual. That book will tell you it has this list in it and also has everything you're going to need to know in the first year of your baby's life.

But a lot of that information is very helpful in their first three to five days of life, so that book. If you haven't bought it already, you can get it on Amazon.

There's also a link in this show notes, but the baby manual is helpful for both parents to read before the baby is born, because it's just really short.

It's like 100 pages long. You can read it. My husband, Josie, read at least five times before our baby was born. But I think he actually did read through five time, and he doesn't read very much.

So he really found it easy to reading and remembered all of the information in it, Like as soon as our baby was born, he was changing diapers. He knew how to burp him.

You had to feed him, you know how make a bottle. he knew that you don't put a blanket in the bed. And he said he learned it all in the book. I wrote this book, I'm not just tooting my own horn.

It really is a good book and it really has everything you're going to need. He said it avoided at least five doctor's visits and two ER visits in first 10 months of our kid's life.

So it's definitely helpful, and I highly recommend it. Bring it with you to the hospital because you'll want to look stuff up while you are there, like the poop colors and things like that.

There's lots of pictures in it too. Anyways, baby manual, all about it. All right, and then stuff to bring for your baby. You wanna bring an outfit for you baby and depending on how big your babies measuring, if they're measuring less than the 10th percentile, you might need a preemie size of outfit.

If they're between the 10th and 90th percentile, which is most babies, then regular newborn size outfit is fine. And if they are measuring over the 90% percentiles, I'd still bring a newborn-size, but maybe also 0 to 3-month size.

Because those babies grow so quickly and they grow right out of those newborn sizes fast. You also want to bring

a warm hat to bringing your baby home.

And most hospitals, I think actually every hospital I've ever worked at has volunteers that bring in baby hats. So every baby gets sent home with a knit hat, which is really nice.

But also you might want bring some hats for your babies. Baby head sizes vary a lot. I'd say they vary from the size of an orange to the sides of a grapefruit.

So you might want a couple of different sizes of hats or at least a hat that is stretchy. So I'll link one in the show notes that it is a good stretchy hat, that should fit most newborn size heads.

Also the swaddle blankets that have Velcro in them are really helpful. And then the last thing you need and actually the very most important thing that you have to bring to the hospital before your baby is born is a car seat.

The hospital will not let you leave without one. They cannot provide one for you. So you to have bring a seat in so that can take your home. they'll help you install it in your car and make sure it's all nice and safe.

Thank you so much for joining me today. I hope this was really helpful. And next time we're going to talk about the kinds of supplies you needs whether you're planning on breastfeeding or bottle feeding.

Take care. So to recap, the clothing that you need during pregnancy, labor, and the postpartum period is all different because it all has different functions.

So we talk through all of those kind of things and then also a list of what to bring in the hospital bag. But remember that whole list is in The Baby Manual.

Thanks for listening. Remember all of the links from this episode are in the show notes and you can always go to my linktree which is linktr.ee. If you know anybody who is pregnant or has a little baby, tell them about this show.

Maybe they would like to listen to this podcast. They might find something helpful in here. And if you know any friends who are pregnant and want to get them something for their baby shower, I would definitely recommend my book, The Baby Manual.

It's meant to be all inclusive. Really, all the questions that arise in the first year of your baby's life are in that book. So Baby manual is also linked in The Show Notes and on my link tree.

Have a wonderful day.