

A Shopping Guide for the Nursing Mom

MUST HAVES:

1 Breast pump

We checked several in-the-know sources and they all put this item at the top of their list. Pumping your milk ensures that there's always food around for the baby—even when you're not. It also helps if you tend to get uncomfortably full of milk.

Right after childbirth, a manual pump should suffice, and your obstetrician or lactation consultant may even supply your first one. Pumps also come in battery operated and electric models.

The key is to do your research and get a quality pump that will last and do the job right. If you are planning to return to work or have other reasons to be away from your baby for periods of time, a double breast pump is a great investment because you can pump the most amount of milk in the shortest period of time by expressing both breasts at once.

2 Freezer storage containers for milk

Breast milk stored in the fridge will last a couple days and up to 6 months if stored in the freezer. Disposable freezer bags are certainly the most convenient, but we prefer glass containers since studies show that plastic that's not BPA-free can leech into food.

3 Nursing bras

Many of our sources say these are essential for breastfeeding your baby, especially when you are nursing away from home. They also offer great support and are usually really comfortable. Like other types of bra, one size or style does not work for everyone, so try them on before buying.

Pre-birth, buy one or two that are at least one cup size larger than your current breast size. You may have swelling and water retention after delivery, so wait at least a few days before buying more.

4 Breast pads

It's a given that you will leak breast milk—and you will be surprised at how much and how often. These tuck right into your bra, will save you from embarrassing situations, keep your nipples clean, and also help cushion them when tender or sore. You can get your choice of washable (3-4 pairs), disposable (one box) or silicone (one set).

5 Lanolin

Speaking of sore nipples, products with this ingredient are a godsend for helping heal sore, cracked nipples. There are a few brands out on the market specifically for breastfeeding moms. Talk to your doctor or friends who have nursed recently for recommendations.



STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

1 Glass or PBA-free plastic bottles with nipples

The amount to get (maybe 3 - 6) will depend on how much you are going to need to rely on others to pitch in with feedings.

2 Bottle warmer

This is a great item, because it takes the guesswork out of whether the bottle is too hot or too cold. Especially nice to have around if Dad or other caregiver is put in charge.

3 Bottle & nipple brush

No matter how thoroughly your steamer or dishwasher can sanitize your baby's feeding supplies, you'll be grateful for this little brush that reaches into those tight places.

4 Dishwasher basket

This will keep bottle nipples and other small items from getting lost in your washer. It's an inexpensive item and more than worth its cost in hassle-value.

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STRONGLY RECOMMENDED: (continued)

5 Nursing tank tops

These stylish yet practical tops are a great alternative to nursing bras, because they are very comfortable, can be worn on their own or underneath other clothing, and they are designed to flatter your post-pregnancy body.

6 Nursing pillow

These come in handy for positioning, as well as preventing problems with the latch of your baby. Before you buy, find out what kind of support the pillow offers and its intended purpose, like for breast versus bottle feeding, for nursing preemies, for two children at once, etc.

7 Receiving blankets

Fortunately, this is a popular baby shower gift item, because you will probably want at least a half dozen. In addition to keeping your baby warm, they are great for catching spit-up, using as a lap cloth or privacy curtain while breastfeeding, and cleaning up all kinds of messes which can stain and wear them out in no time.

8 Burp cloths

Cloth diapers and heavy (but soft) kitchen towels can work as well. Whatever you use, they will save your clothing and come in handy for wiping spit-up.

GOOD TO HAVE:

1 Baby carrier (sling or wrap)

In addition to being a great hands-free way of transporting and keeping your baby close, these are also excellent for helping you discreetly breastfeed in public.

2 Bibs

These can get stained and start looking nasty fairly quickly, so have a few on hand. Besides, it's always nice to have a fresh one tucked away in case company drops by.

3 Nursing apparel

You may choose to wear special nursing clothing, but it's really a personal choice. If you choose to wear regular clothing, just be sure to avoid one piece garments. Separates and tops that are oversized, soft and non-clinging will work just as well in providing easy access to your nursing bra.

4 Nursing covers

You might also want to look into one of the many styles of nursing covers to use when nursing in public. There are a lot of cute styles. Some even double as lovely, decorative scarves.

5 Diaper bag

No need to lug around the giant diaper bag like your bottle-feeding counterpart. Choose the one that fits your style, can hold diapers, wipes and a few odds and ends, and you're all set.

WHERE TO FIND THESE ITEMS:

A great resource for products and advice is your [local Baby Product Experts certified store](#). Most independent store owners are parents and they take great pride in hand-selecting products for their quality, safety and value. Their knowledgeable staff will also take the time to listen and help you make the right choices for you and your baby.



Baby Product Experts specialty stores provide safe, high-quality products and expert advice.