

Pregnancy Must Haves

I generally like to live simply, so this list of pregnancy must haves is not excessive. I am not one to buy the latest and greatest products, but this list contains the items I truly feel were a necessity in order to keep discomfort at bay during my pregnancy. I hope it helps improve the quality of your pregnancy, Mama.

○ Pregnancy Pillow

I had a C-shaped pregnancy pillow for sleeping at night to help ease the hip pain that started at 11 weeks. It was invaluable to me, but I would have rather had a U-shaped pillow so that turning over during the night would have been easier.

○ Exercise Ball

Sitting on an exercise ball during pregnancy is so good for opening up your hips in preparation for labor. It is also often the most comfortable way to sit when your body is changing shape and size so drastically.

○ Chair Back Support

If you're working in an office or sitting in a chair a lot during your pregnancy, you will probably discover that your back can't handle sitting in a regular chair the same way it used to. I used a firm back support

cushion while sitting in my office chair to support my strained back.

○ Maternity Leggings

As your belly expands, comfortable clothing is a must. While there are some great maternity jeans out there, you will definitely want some comfy, non-restrictive leggings for lounging around the house.

○ Nursing/Maternity Bras

Regardless of whether or not your breasts grow significantly during pregnancy, you will need a bigger bra as you get further into your pregnancy due to weight gain and your rib cage expanding. If you're planning to nurse, buying nursing bras as your maternity bras will save you from having to purchase additional bras when the baby arrives.

○ Tennis Balls

My chiropractor taught me this trick. When you just can't take the back pain anymore, it's time to get deep into those muscles and work the knots out. Lay on the floor with a tennis ball under your back or hip, wherever your problem area is, and roll over it. This basically works like a deep tissue massage. It might be painful, but once you're loosened up, you will feel SO much better.

○ Large Water Bottle

As I got further along in my pregnancy, my thirst became more and more insatiable. Even if you're not feeling especially thirsty, it is important to

drink a lot of water while pregnant. A large water bottle will also come in handy after birth if you breastfeed since that also makes you thirsty and increases your water intake requirements.

○ Pads

Some women have a lot of vaginal discharge during pregnancy. For this, you may want some light pads. Additionally, you may end up needing some heavier pads as your baby grows and puts more pressure on your bladder. Incontinence is just a reality of motherhood.

○ Snack Bars

While pregnant, many women have insatiable appetites. While I did not really experience this, I did develop symptoms of low blood sugar pretty quickly if I didn't eat often. In any event, it is beneficial to always have snack bars on hand.

○ Cocoa Body Butter

I managed to avoid stretch marks until my final month of pregnancy. I was hopeful to avoid them all together, but this just isn't something we can entirely control. However, I got a minimal amount of stretch marks on my belly which are now barely noticeable. I believe this is partly because I applied my homemade body butter (with a cocoa butter base) to my belly generously every morning and evening while pregnant, as well as for a few months postpartum.