

Why Do Some Women Nest?

Since the beginning of time, it's been observed that non-human animals ready their nests for their soon-to-arrive babies. Consider the plight of the hamster who chews and shreds newspapers to build her birthing spot and then hides and stores kibble before delivering her young.

Researchers have long pondered the mystery and have come up with a few philosophies to explain nesting and to explain why not all moms experience it. They postulate that moms typically nest near the end of their pregnancies because:

- they realize time is running out
- they are cooped up, bored, or frustrated at still being pregnant
- they are energized at the thought of bringing home their new baby, and they want everything to be perfect and ready

There really is very little research to explain why some moms feel it and some don't. A good reason a mom might not nest is because she's completely ready!

Other reasons moms might not nest are because:

- they are relaxed or they have already experienced birth and know what to expect
- they really just haven't thought too much about the upcoming changes
- they may not be in a permanent place where they can nest
- they are on bedrest and just physically can't

Use Your Nesting Energy

Nesting or not nesting is perfectly normal and fine. However, if you do get the nesting urge, then you can certainly use it to get things done. Here are some ways you can use your nesting energy to get ahead or ready for labor and delivery:

- Get baby's *room* ready. Get outfits hung in the closet or put away in drawers.
- Get baby *equipment* ready (crib set up, bottles ready, and other items put together).
- Get ahead on *meals* (freeze as many as you can).
- Get *phone numbers* ready (of the people you'll want to call once the baby is born. Put them in a contact group on your phone).
- Arrange childcare if you have other children.
- Install your baby's *car seat* and have it ready and inspected to ensure that it is installed correctly. Go to www.nhtsa.gov/parents-and-caregivers to find a certified technician.
- Pack your Hospital Bags.

When Nesting Gets Out of Control

Nesting should be a little fun and a way to burn off nervous energy and get you ready for your baby's homecoming. It should free your mind and help you to focus more fully on your baby. If you are experiencing anxiety that causes you to lose sleep, forget to eat, or clean until exhaustion, if you become obsessive or compulsive, or experience panic attacks, see your medical provider.

Resources include:

1. American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists. Nesting During Pregnancy. Found at <http://americanpregnancy.org/planning/nesting-during-pregnancy/>, accessed 1/15/2019.
2. Hazelrigg, Eric, MD - Ob/Gyn. Interview.

Packing for the Hospital

Pack Your Hospital Bag or Two.

Pull out and dust off the suitcase you'll take to the hospital and start packing it. Have a separate small bag for labor and the first night after so that you don't have to bring in everything right away. Here are some things I recommend.

Overnight Bag

- Glasses. You will have to remove contact lenses.
- Nightgown for after the birth when you'll want to get out of those uncomfortable, and slightly immodest hospital gowns. Select one that will be easy for nursing.
- Underwear.
- Slippers with non-slip soles.
- Robe. You'll be on your feet and walking soon after delivery.
- A nursing bra.
- Comb, brush, toothpaste and toothbrush, deodorant, and make-up.
- Hair tie or something to keep your hair out of your face.
- Birthing aids, such as lip balm, a tennis ball to have your birth coach massage your lower back with during painful labor, music, and breath mints for your coach.
- And a camera.

Longer-term Bag

- Two more night gowns.
- A couple more pair of underwear.
- Extra nursing bras and pads.
- Extra-heavy sanitary pads to wear home.
- Socks to keep your feet warm. The hospital may provide some with non-slip nubbies on the bottoms.
- Clean maternity clothes to wear home.
- Baby's outfit for going home in.
- Something to read or do for when you can't sleep.