

HOME BIRTH

Like many of you, I was constantly asked toward the end of my pregnancy which hospital I would give birth. It's a common question asked at baby showers or by well-intended friends and family members. For my first birth, I picked a birth center attached to a hospital. For my second birth, I wanted to be as far away from a hospital as possible. Some women have wonderful birth experiences at the hospital and I'm incredibly happy for them! However, that wasn't the case for me. When I discovered I was pregnant with my second baby, I knew I would have a home birth. However, my personal medical decision concerning my birth environment triggered emotional responses by many people. Home birth isn't for everyone and requires a lot of preventative effort to stay low-risk. If you have made that commitment and would like to birth at home, here are some tips + products that helped me have a redeeming birth experience at home!

home birth

Click on each icon to jump to desired section.



For You



For Baby



For your Family



home birth facts

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/20221117.htm

Home births in the United States rose 12% from 2020 to 2021, and reached the highest level since at least 1990.

The 12% increase in home births from 2020 to 2021 follows a 22% increase from 2019 to 2020, with increases by maternal race and Hispanic origin ranging from 21%-36%.

There were 51,642 home births in 2021, an increase of 13% from 2020 (45,646). This increase followed a 19% rise in the number of home births from 2019 (38,506) to 2020.



<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4399594/>

For women in most developed nations, the choice of where to give birth is not really a consideration, because birthing in a hospital is the cultural norm. The hospital is where their mothers and their grandmothers most likely gave birth. This is, however, a relatively recent phenomenon. While time parameters vary from country to country, most developed countries experienced a dramatic shift from home to hospital birth during the 20th century. In the UK, for example, 80% of women gave birth at home in the 1920s, and in 2011 only 2.3% of births occurred at home.¹ The US had a similar shift, from 50% home births in 1938 to fewer than 1% in 1955.²



<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2742137/>

Planned home birth attended by a registered midwife was associated with very low and comparable rates of perinatal death and reduced rates of obstetric interventions and other adverse perinatal outcomes compared with planned hospital birth attended by a midwife or physician.

The decision to plan a birth attended by a registered midwife at home versus in hospital was associated with very low and comparable rates of perinatal death. Women who planned a home birth were at reduced risk of all obstetric interventions assessed and were at similar or reduced risk of adverse maternal outcomes compared with women who planned to give birth in hospital accompanied by a midwife or physician. Newborns whose mothers planned a home birth were at similar or reduced risk of fetal and neonatal morbidity compared with newborns whose mothers planned a hospital birth, except for admission to hospital (or readmission if born in hospital), which was more likely compared with newborns whose mothers were in the physician-attended cohort.

Have you read that home birth is dangerous? Here is an [informative article](#) the digs into why some studies cautioning against home birth may not reflect an accurate picture. During my research, I did notice a challenge of discerning between planned and unplanned home births. **This is why I suggest all women be prepared for a home birth because birth plans are just plans.**

why home birth?

Wondering why a pregnant woman would want a home birth? Here are some potential positive benefits of home birth. However, it's important to note that while home birth can be a safe + fulfilling choice for some women, it may not be suitable for everyone. Always consult your healthcare provider to determine the best option for your specific situation.

- * **Comfort and Familiarity** Many women feel more comfortable and relaxed in their own home environment. Being in familiar surroundings can help reduce stress and anxiety during labor. I labored beautifully at home for my first pregnancy. It gave me confidence that I would be able to do the same my second labor!
- * **Control and Autonomy** Home birth allows women to have more control over their birthing experience. They can choose who is present, the birthing positions, and the overall atmosphere of the birth.
- * **Personalized Care** In a home birth, midwives often provide one-on-one care, offering personalized attention and support throughout the entire birthing process. This can foster a strong sense of trust and connection. It's also nice not to hear other women birthing around you. I still remember hearing the woman in the room next to me screaming while I was resting. It was terrifying for a first time mom!
- * **Postpartum Comfort** After the birth, you are already at home, which means you can rest and recover in your own space, surrounded by your belongings. After my home birth, we called my in-laws to announce the birth of our son. They commented several times how relaxed we were and how different it was from our hospital birth!
- * **Reduced Medical Interventions** Home births typically have lower rates of medical interventions such as epidurals, inductions, and cesarean sections. This can be appealing to women who want to avoid unnecessary medical procedures.
- * **Reduced Risk of Infections** As we learned in the GBS section of the [Motherhood Guide](#), hospitals carry a higher risk of exposure to hospital-acquired infections. Home births can minimize this risk because you're in a controlled, clean environment.
- * **Family Involvement** Home birth can be a more family-centered experience, allowing partners, children, or other loved ones to be more actively involved in the birthing process if desired. I personally prefer to labor independently with just my spouse and mom present, however many women love having their children around to support them!
- * **Lower Costs** Home births are often less expensive than hospital births, as they may not involve the same medical procedures and facility fees.



<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8507766/>

A standard home birth package includes prenatal care, delivery, and postpartum care. The price of this package is described as the global fee. Based on the data collected, the average global fee for a home birth in the United States is USD 4650

The USD 8309 estimated average cost of a birth center birth [20] and the USD 4650 estimated average cost of a home birth fall below the USD 13,562 estimated average cost of a vaginal hospital birth [19] by USD 5252 and USD 8912, respectively.

\$4,650

Average homebirth fee

\$8,309

Average birth center fee

\$13,562

Average vaginal hospital birth fee

Midwife fees + most home birth supply costs are eligible for HSA/FSA. Be sure to check for updated guidance. One of my biggest frustrations with my hospital birth was the finance department. Even though I paid upfront for a discount, I was still charged ludicrous fees for months after my firstborn's birth. My husband had increased our insurance coverage in anticipation of birth, yet we still paid out of pocket over \$8k. For our son, we paid less than \$5k from our HSA and had better quality prenatal care, a better labor and delivery, and robust postpartum support. It was a much better deal!

why not home birth?

Even though I'm a big advocate for home birth, I'm fully aware it isn't for everyone! Here are some reasons home birth may not be a good fit. However, there are exceptions for everything. If you have an experienced medical professional in your area that can support your medical situation, then that may be a helpful avenue to pursue home birth.

* **High-Risk Pregnancy**

"Risk" is a subjective term, however if there are medical conditions or complications that could pose a threat to the health of the mother or baby during labor and delivery, then I personally would consider them higher risk. High-risk conditions can include gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, placenta previa, history of preterm birth, or if you are on medications that complicate the natural birthing process.

* **Previous complications** If you've experienced a ruptured uterus, I would be extremely cautious about home birth. However, if you've experienced complications due to medical interventions in previous pregnancies, then that would be something to discuss with an experienced midwife concerning home birth.

* **Fetal complications** A family member of mine discovered during an ultrasound that her child's stomach hadn't formed properly. Sadly, she knew her child wouldn't live more than a few hours after birth. However, she was able to prepare a special ceremony for her child and cherished those few hours in the hospital. I have another friend that discovered her son needed heart surgery right after birth. She had a natural birth in the hospital and he was able to get life-saving surgery. Fetal complications that require surgical care are excellent reasons to birth in a hospital!

* **Lack of support or desire** If you don't feel comfortable with home birth and find yourself stressing about it, then home birth isn't the best fit for you! Any unnecessary stress will complicate birth and isn't worth the heartache.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- 1 Am I in Good Health?** Are you in generally good health without significant pre-existing medical conditions that might complicate pregnancy + childbirth?
- 2 Is My Pregnancy Low Risk?** Has your pregnancy been classified as low-risk by your healthcare provider, meaning there are no major medical concerns or complications?
- 3 Do I Have Adequate Prenatal Care?** Have you received regular prenatal care throughout your pregnancy to monitor the health of both you and your baby?
- 4 Do I Feel Comfortable and Safe at Home?** Are you comfortable in your home environment, and do you feel safe and secure giving birth there?
- 5 Do I Have Access to a Qualified Midwife or Healthcare Provider?** Have you found a qualified and experienced midwife or healthcare provider who is willing to attend your home birth and who can provide appropriate prenatal and postnatal care?
- 6 Is There Easy Access to Emergency Medical Services?** Do you live in an area with easy access to emergency medical services and a nearby hospital in case of unexpected complications?
- 7 Is My Support System in Place?** Do you have a strong support system in place, including a partner or birthing companion who is comfortable with the idea of a home birth?
- 8 Have I Discussed My Decision with My Healthcare Provider?** Have you discussed your desire for a home birth with your healthcare provider to get their input and guidance based on your medical history?
- 9 Am I Prepared for the Unexpected?** Have you considered the possibility of complications during labor and delivery and thought about how they would be managed in a home setting? Is your midwife trained in these scenarios?
- 10 Have I Considered the Legal and Regulatory Aspects?** Are you aware of the legal and regulatory requirements for home birth in your area, including any necessary permits or licenses? Especially if you live in Nebraska!

If you plan for home birth, your midwife will most likely have a birth kit preselected for you to purchase at a birth supply store or website. My midwife provided me a link and I simply purchased the kit under her name. It was very easy to have everything I needed! My best advice is to order your birth kit sooner than later. My son was due when our nation was enduring crazy supply chain issues. Thankfully, I had purchased my kit well before my due date so I didn't have to stress about having everything before birth. For familiarization purposes, here are some items that will probably be included in your midwife's birth kit for home birth. This is not an exhaustive list.



Underpads to keep under you as you labor. I was not prepared for all the bodily fluids that discharged during my first birth which is why I ended up just wearing a bra the whole time. We used these on my birth ball, on my bed, and beside my bed. Basically anywhere I was laboring!

For your bed, layer (1) the sheets you want to sleep on with your newborn, (2) a plastic liner like a shower curtain, and then on top (3) some old sheets that are comfortable but you don't mind getting soiled during labor or delivery.



You'll need a few garbage bags for laundry, trash, and your placenta bowl. Don't go fancy for the bowl! It's just to hold the placenta until your baby's cord stops pulsing. Then you'll need some gallon ziplock bags to freeze the placenta till trash day. Some women encapsulate + consume their placenta, however it doesn't resonate with me. I don't have a scientific reason, it just doesn't appeal to me.



Hydrogen peroxide for getting blood stains out. I only had a few drops of blood on my bedroom carpet after my son was born. My birth team took care of them within minutes without me having to worry about staining!

Ziplocks of frozen peas are great for your perineum after the birth!



Organic cotton washcloths are wonderful during labor especially when you hit transition. My husband held a wet + cold washcloth on my forehead during transition. It was incredibly refreshing! I also had one around my neck at one point.

water birth

I personally didn't have a pool at my home birth. For my hospital birth, there was a labor tub that I used and despite what I originally thought, I didn't like being in a tub. It surprised me because I typically love water, but I didn't have the freedom to move like I wanted in a tub, so I didn't fuss with it for my home birth. However, I am tempted to try it the next birth with the new [Earthside birth pool](#)! Here are some of the benefits of this pool:

- * padded floor + seat for comfort
- * cup holder + four handles
- * bpa free, eco pvc
- * affirmation printed on the side says "each wave brings me closer to my baby"



Click [here](#) for more info about water births!

your first meal after birth

Make sure you have a hearty, protein-rich meal for your birth team to warm up right after you give birth. Try to keep it simple + easily digestible. It'll help with any after pains!



Primal No-Bean Chili



Creamy Sweet Potato Curry Soup



Bone broth



Traditional Lentil Stew



Hearty Sausage Stew

Very simple + easy to prepare!



MAMA MEALS

I've tried all of these + they are delicious! These arrive frozen and are easily defrosted for postpartum.

If you live in NV, CA, AZ, and UT, this is an excellent meal service for nourishing + healing postpartum meals! You'll get free shipping on orders over \$120 and \$20 off your first order over \$200 with discount code "JUSTTHEINSERTS". Mama Meals does ship to the continental USA, however shipping is quite expensive. She also has a [postpartum recipe guide](#) that is wonderful to prepare + freeze no matter where you live!

postpartum cramps

If you're a first time mom, you most likely won't experience this. However, if you're pregnant with your second baby, make sure you get some kind of natural pain relief when the postpartum cramps hit! I was not mentally prepared for how strong mine were after my son was born. I was incredibly grateful my mom and midwife were prepared to offer me relief! Talk with your provider concerning the options below:

HERBAL TINCTURES

HOMEOPATHY



\$24.99



\$22.49



\$23.99



\$8.03



\$29.95

After birth, your midwife will check to see if you had any vaginal tearing. I tore in the exact spot I tore with my first birth so my midwife put a yoga block under my lower back and stitched me right up on my bed with a local anesthetic. I'll go more in depth in my Postpartum sections, but here are a couple things to use right after birth!



100% certified organic cotton top sheet period underwear. \$13.29 for 8 pack

Herbal perineal spray with witch hazel to spray directly on postpartum underwear or pads.



\$11.49

Now, let's go through some of the items you'll need on hand for your baby during a home birth! Again, your midwife will most likely have a preferred list - this is just a general guideline and by no means exhaustive.



Despite what you may have seen on TV, babies are not born looking immediately like this adorable baby here!



Depending how many weeks you were when you gave birth, your baby might still have a protective coating called vernix as well as various afterbirth fluids on them. Because of this, I'd recommend snuggling your newborn with an organic towel versus a really pretty receiving blanket you got at your baby shower. I used this towel set for my son. They washed up great and now we use them for bath time!



Wondering why you'd use a heating pad for a baby? It's to keep the towels you'll use for baby nice and warm! My birth assistant kept the towels for baby in a pillow case with a heating pad. She also monitored the temperature in the room to make sure it was warm enough when baby was born. I wanted the ceiling fan on when I was laboring and she was quick to turn it off as soon as my son was born - this is why it's important to create a quality birth team up front!

I also used this heating pad for after birth cramps and for my back when I was sore from breastfeeding. Yes, you can absolutely find an organic heating pad that you can warm up in the microwave. Those are great options, however I wanted something I could operate without asking someone for help. Find what works best for you!

Yes, that's a cookie sheet! I hope you won't have to use it, but it's important to keep close during birth. It's used to provide a flat, hard surface for neonatal resuscitation. Make sure you confirm your midwife is certified and experienced in neonatal resuscitation.



Keep organic olive oil or coconut oil close by as well to apply on your newborn's bottom. It'll help prevent irritation or sticking when baby's first poop, called meconium, happens. Read more about meconium [here](#) (including pictures of how it looks!)

I'll go more in depth about diapers in the Postpartum sections, however here are two brands that I like for newborns. If you plan on cloth diapering, maybe consider disposable organic options until the meconium has passed to prevent the laundry hassle.

HealthyBaby



My midwife gave us the option to burn my son's umbilical cord versus cutting it with scissors after the cord stopped pulsing. If you haven't read about the benefits of delayed cord clamping, click [here](#). To learn more about cord burning (versus cutting) and what it looks like, click [here](#)! Because the flame cauterizes the cord, there's no need to clamp. My midwife had a burning box like the one pictured here, but there are many available on Etsy!



If you are Rh- and your partner is Rh+, an Eldon card is used for blood-typing your baby's blood after birth. For more information about Rh factor, read about "Rh- products" in the Second Trimester section of the [Motherhood Guide](#).

If you do newborn blood screening, a Neat Nick Heel Lancet + heel warmer will be used. The heel warmer increases blood flow to your baby's heel area, minimizing potential bruising, infection, or cartilage damage. This is done 24-48 hours after birth. Read more about the process [here](#). If you would like to opt out of newborn screening, research your State's exemption laws.





\$35.40

10% off

\$35.09 with discount

Declining the synthetic vitamin K injection? Here are two oral options if you'd like to have them on hand. I personally didn't use any vitamin K supplementation after my home birth. We also opted out of circumcision + breastfed immediately after birth to help increase vitamin K levels. If you'd like to read more about circumcision, click here. If you decide to circumcise for religious reasons, try to find a pediatric urologist that will perform one 8 days after birth.

Your midwife will provide forms to fill out for your baby's proof of birth, however it's nice to have a commemorative keepsake birth certificate as well! There are many on Etsy too. Your midwife will most likely have a footprinter in her recommended birth kit for newborn prints too.



After rubbing in all my baby's vernix and enjoying a shower myself, I loosely wrapped my newborn in an organic swaddle while still maintaining skin-to-skin to regulate his body temperature. Again, I'll have lots of options in the Postpartum sections, but here are some great newborn blankets! Look for GOTS-certified organic cotton.



\$23.99



\$39.99



\$38.99

For the first few days, I try to keep baby's skin on my skin as much as possible. Baby truly only really wants you and our bodies are still connected to our baby's even after they are born. Here are some of the benefits of skin-on-skin during the first days of life:

- * **Temperature regulation** Your chest provides warmth, keeping your baby's body temp within a safe range.
- * **Heart rate + breathing** Skin-to-skin has a calming effect on baby and mom by stabilizing the baby's heart/respiratory rate.
- * **Stress reduction** Oxytocin is released which can help milk production and lower stress levels for both mom + baby. This helps sleep and feeding patterns, too.
- * **Bonding + emotional connection** The tactile sensation of skin contact, your scent, and the sound of your voice all help your baby feel safe + comforted.

Even though I mostly snuggle under cozy blankets with baby right after birth (with their airway clear of course), I do love these types of sleepers. They make it easy to take on/off and keep diaper changes relatively stress-free. No need to get many, your baby will grow out of them quickly! I like neutral colors to reuse for the next baby.



\$34.00



\$22.95



\$38.00

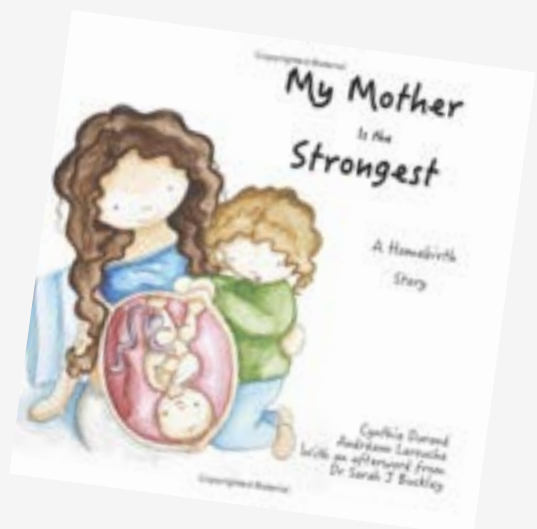
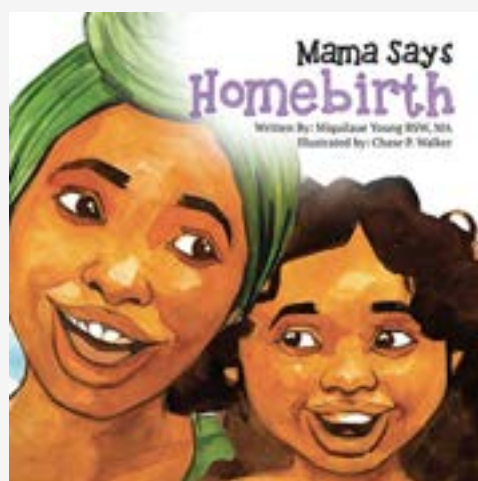
To check on baby's circulation, make sure you can easily access their hands + feet. And take lots of pictures!

If you have older children, you may be wondering what happens with them during a home birth. Some women organize for a family member to watch them when labor starts (like I did) and some that labor at night don't have to worry about it because their kids are sleeping. Then some prefer to have their older children present during labor to encourage them and to provide a positive birth experience for their children to witness. It's up to you! Here are some things to consider for your home birth:

- * **Age and Maturity** Consider the age and emotional maturity of your older children. While some children may be curious and ready to participate, others might be too young or sensitive to handle the sight and sounds of labor and birth. Use your judgment to determine if it's appropriate for each child.
- * **Preparation** Prepare your older children for what to expect during a home birth. Use age-appropriate language and books or videos to help them understand the process. Discuss the sights, sounds, and possible emotions they may experience.
- * **Continuous Communication** Encourage your older children to express their feelings and ask questions throughout the process. Be honest and reassuring in your responses.
- * **Role Involvement** If your older children express interest in being involved, offer age-appropriate tasks, such as bringing towels, fetching water, or simply being present as a source of support and encouragement.
- * **Remember that every child is unique,** and what works for one may not work for another. Assess your older children's readiness, involve them in the decision-making process, and prioritize their emotional well-being throughout the home birth experience.
- * **Support Person** Assign a trusted adult or doula to focus on your older children's needs during labor and birth. This person can provide comfort, answer questions, and ensure the children's well-being while you and your partner focus on the birth.
- * **Birth Plan** Clearly communicate your birth plan and expectations to your support team and older children. Let them know their role and boundaries, such as when it's okay to approach you and when they should give you space.
- * **Distraction and Entertainment** Have activities, books, or games on hand to keep your older children engaged and distracted if they become anxious or restless during the labor process.
- * **Backup Plan** Have a backup plan in case your older children become too uncomfortable or if the situation becomes too intense for them. Arrange for someone to take them to a trusted friend or relative's house if needed.
- * **Post-Birth Transition** Consider how your older children will transition after the birth. Make sure they have time to bond with the new sibling and receive attention and support as they adjust to the changes in the family dynamic.

home birth children's books

Here are some great books to read to your children to prepare them for your home birth!



Additionally, you can watch your previous home birth videos (if applicable) with your younger children as well as role play with dolls to help them visualize the birthing process. As always, use your own discretion. If you do have them there, make sure that they understand you are focusing on birth and that someone else is there specially for them to help them get snacks, go potty, or anything else they need. That should be the last thing you have to worry about while in labor!

unsupportive partners

We talked a little bit about partner education in the Birth Basics section of the [Motherhood Guide](#). Let's discuss this further with the home birth perspective. When I found my home birth midwife during my second pregnancy, she had several forms to fill out as soon as I became her patient. One form was for my husband to complete which included multiple questions about his knowledge, perspective, and expectations about home birth. How your partner feels about home birth will eventually effect you! No matter how strong you are about a home birth, it is essential to gain the support of your partner. It will make a world of difference the day of delivery. Here are some ways to navigate any hesitation or fear your partner may have about home birth:

* **Initiate Open Conversations**

Encourage honest and open dialogue about his fears. Create a safe and non-judgmental space for him to express his concerns and emotions.

* **Provide Information** Share information about home birth, the safety measures in place, and the qualifications of the healthcare provider or midwife attending the birth. Education can help dispel myths and misconceptions.

* **Attend Prenatal Classes** Consider attending prenatal classes together. These classes may cover the home birth process, which can provide your husband with a better understanding of what to expect.

* **Discuss Emergency Plans** Address the fear of emergencies by discussing the emergency plan thoroughly. Understand the steps to take if a transfer to a hospital is needed and reassure him that safety is a top priority.

* **Consider a Doula** A doula can provide additional support during labor and help ease fears. Having a trained professional present can be comforting for both partners.

* **Share Positive Stories** Share positive home birth stories with your partner. Reading or hearing about successful home births can provide encouragement and reassurance.

* **Meet with your Healthcare Provider**

Arrange a meeting with your midwife or healthcare provider to discuss your partner's concerns. Hearing from a trusted professional can provide reassurance.

* **Involve Him in Planning** Involve your husband in the birth planning process. Discuss your birth plan together, including his role during labor and birth. When he feels included, he may feel more in control and less fearful.

* **Talk to Other Dads** Encourage your partner to speak with other fathers who have experienced home birth. They can share their perspectives and offer support.

* **Create a Relaxing Environment**

Prioritize creating a comfortable and soothing environment for labor and birth. Discuss with your partner how you both can contribute to a calming atmosphere.

* **Respect His Decision** Ultimately, if your partner remains uncomfortable with the idea of home birth, respect his decision. Continue discussing your options and explore other birthing choices that align with both of your comfort levels. It will be harder to have a home birth with the added stress of your partner's fears. Maybe a birth center is a better option.

Remember that it's normal for partners to have fears and concerns about childbirth, especially if it's their first experience. Patience, empathy, and open communication are key to addressing these fears and making informed decisions together.

Additionally, several women have recommended watching the below documentaries with your partner if they are less inclined to read birth books or investigate research.



THE BUSINESS OF BEING BORN

Explores the medicalization of childbirth in the United States and advocates for more natural birth options, including home birth.



A unique perspective on the home birth experience by featuring individuals who are intimately familiar with the medical system yet chose a more natural and home-based approach for their own births.

lots of meal prep

Make sure to have a well-stocked pantry and freezer as you get closer to birth. You shouldn't have to worry about feeding logistics from the moment your contractions start to at least a few weeks after your baby is born. Be sure to go through the Nutrition section as well as the postpartum meal preparation tips in the Third Trimester section of the [Motherhood Guide](#) for ideas. Additionally, here are some of my family's go-to meals we keep on hand for everyone else in the house that are easily prepared by my husband. Obviously, the best option is to have freshly made foods, however that isn't always possible during the postpartum phase. These are the next best option!



A Dozen Cousins is a great brand + the sides very easy to prepare. We use the beans for quick tacos, nachos, or in a three bean salad. I've also added the rice to a soup to add some additional texture.

Speaking of soups, **Amy's Soups** is a great organic option. I tend to avoid canned goods, however these are great last minute options that I "beef" up with the rice options above. Or I'll cook some ground beef in the skillet and add to their vegetarian chili. Lots of options!



Kevin's Natural Foods has delicious simmer sauces that make homemade meals easy to prepare. For example, we love the Teriyaki or Korean BBQ sauce over some ground beef, rice, and steamed broccoli. If your partner has enough foresight, he could add the Cilantro Lime Sauce in a glass food container with chicken to marinate for a few hours before dinner. Or add it in a crockpot for a slow-cooked meal.

For prepping the freezer, my kids love **Alexia** baby potatoes! We'll steam or roast some green beans along with slow roasted venison. I like these ones because they only have olive oil versus inflammatory oils in most freezer meals. It may help to have your partner help you prepare a few of these meals before you go into labor so he's ready to whip up a nutritious meal when your family is sick of takeout + you're focused on your newborn.



Another freezer option is veggies! I bulk shop when my local grocery has a sale on my favorite frozen veggies and keep them in our deep freezer. I've found roasting or steaming them to just cooked in a double broiler are the best ways to avoid a soggy texture. Make sure to find frozen veggies that don't have any filler or inflammatory ingredients. I've found the pre-seasoned ones do have less-than-desirable ingredients which is why I'll add a Kevin's sauce packet or just salt + olive oil to plain frozen veggies. Pro tip: get a deep stainless steel sheet pan like [this one](#). I got mine years ago. No issues with overflowing or sauces spilling over. Very easy to clean too!

If you are part of a community + someone offers to make you a meal, do not reject them! Always, always, always accept their kindness - it's one less meal your family has to coordinate. [Mealtrain.com](#) is an excellent free resource too.