

Birth by Bushra

A GUIDE FROM BIRTH BY BUSHRA

Your Hospital Bag Checklist

FOR MOTHERS GIVING BIRTH IN ABU DHABI

A thoughtful, midwife-curated guide to packing for labour, recovery and your first days with baby — tailored to the realities of UAE hospital birth.

MIDWIFERY-LED CARE · UAE

Before we *begin*

Packing your hospital bag should feel calm, not chaotic. This is a guide built around what actually matters in Abu Dhabi hospitals — what they provide, what they don't, and the small comforts that make a real difference. Pack two bags from around 36 weeks: one for you, one for baby. Keep them by the door.

A FEW THINGS TO KNOW FIRST

Most Abu Dhabi hospitals — including Corniche, Danat Al Emarat, Mediclinic Airport Road and others — provide a hospital gown, basic toiletries, sanitary pads, baby's first nappy and a swaddle. You don't need to pack everything — you need to pack what helps you feel like you.

If you're booked at a private hospital with a postnatal stay of 2–4 nights, lean toward the longer-stay list. For Corniche or shorter stays, a lighter bag is plenty.

Mum's *bag*

◆ DOCUMENTS & ADMIN

- ☐ Emirates ID (yours and your partner's)
- ☐ Passport with residency visa page
- ☐ Insurance card & pre-approval letter
Call your hospital ahead to confirm.
- ☐ Marriage certificate (attested copy)
Required at most UAE hospitals for baby's birth certificate.
- ☐ Birth preferences document
- ☐ Recent scan reports & blood results

◆ TOILETRIES

- ☐ Toothbrush & toothpaste
- ☐ Face wash, moisturiser, deodorant
- ☐ Shampoo, conditioner, body wash
- ☐ Hairbrush & dry shampoo
- ☐ Glasses or contact lens kit
- ☐ Any regular medications

◆ FOR LABOUR

- ☐ Lightweight abaya or long robe
For walking the corridors in early labour.
- ☐ Two comfortable nightdresses that open at the front
- ☐ Grippy socks
Warm feet and steady footing — labour rooms in Abu Dhabi can run cold.
- ☐ Non-slip slippers
- ☐ Hair ties & a soft headband
- ☐ Lip balm
- ☐ Flannel or small face cloth
- ☐ Personal prayer mat, tasbeeh or prayer beads, if they bring you comfort

Labour comfort *tools*

These are the items that turn a clinical room into a calmer space — drug-free pain relief, sensory comfort, and the small touches that help you feel like yourself through labour. Bring what speaks to you; you don't need everything here.

◆ PAIN RELIEF & MOVEMENT

- ☐ TENS machine
A wonderful drug-free pain relief option for early labour.
- ☐ Electric heated blanket
Excellent for early labour, period pain and induction.
- ☐ Stress ball or birthing comb
Squeezing one in each hand can ease contractions.
- ☐ Theragun, if you already own one
Not a must — only worth bringing if you happen to have one.

◆ ATMOSPHERE

- ☐ Speakers
- ☐ LED tea lights, candles or fairy lights
Soften the clinical light. Battery-operated only.

◆ FRESHENING UP

- ☐ Face mist (Evian spray works beautifully)
- ☐ Body wipes
- ☐ Mouthwash & mints
- ☐ Handheld mirror

◆ SMALL PRACTICALITIES

- ☐ Small jewellery box
Ideally remove all jewellery before coming in — but if anything has to come off, have somewhere safe to keep it.

BUSHRA'S TIP

A TENS machine, electric heated blanket and stress ball together cover three different kinds of pain relief — heat, distraction and pressure. Even one of them can change how the early hours feel.

Comfort, recovery & calm

◆ COMFORT & CALM

- ☐ Your own pillow with a coloured pillowcase
So it doesn't go home with the hospital linen.
- ☐ Light shawl or pashmina
- ☐ Phone & long charging cable
Hospital sockets are rarely close to the bed.
- ☐ Headphones & a playlist or Quran recitation
- ☐ Essential oil or familiar scent
- ☐ Eye mask

◆ SNACKS & HYDRATION

- ☐ Dates
A beautiful Sunnah for energy in labour.
- ☐ Nuts, energy bars, dried fruit
- ☐ Candy or Haribos
Quick sugar when you need a lift.
- ☐ Bone broth
Powdered sachets to mix with hot water, or homemade in a flask. Excellent for muscle strength and endurance — packed with protein, easy on the stomach.
- ☐ Reusable water bottle with a straw
- ☐ Isotonic drinks or coconut water
- ☐ Honey sachets

◆ POSTNATAL ESSENTIALS

- ☐ 3–4 high-waisted cotton briefs
Disposable mesh briefs are also wonderful.
- ☐ 2 nursing bras (one soft, one supportive)
- ☐ Breast pads
- ☐ Nipple balm
- ☐ Silverettes
Soothing silver cups for sore nipples in the early days.
- ☐ Nipple shields
Useful to have on hand for latch challenges.
- ☐ Maternity pads — heavy flow
Hospitals provide some, but bring your own brand.
- ☐ Loose, modest going-home outfit
You'll still look around 5 months pregnant — and that's normal.

BUSHRA'S TIP

Pack a second smaller pouch with just the labour essentials — lip balm, hair tie, water bottle, phone charger — so your partner can grab what you need without rummaging.

Baby's bag

Most Abu Dhabi hospitals provide nappies, wipes and a swaddle during your stay — but you'll want a few personal items from the moment baby arrives, and a proper going-home set.

◆ CLOTHING

- ☐ 4–5 cotton bodysuits — newborn size only
0–3m clothes rarely fit a newborn properly.
- ☐ 4–5 sleepsuits with feet
- ☐ 2 soft hats
- ☐ 2 pairs of scratch mittens
- ☐ Socks or booties
- ☐ A muslin or two for swaddling
- ☐ Going-home outfit
Layered: bodysuit, sleepsuit, hat, light blanket.

◆ GOING HOME

- ☐ Approved infant car seat
Mandatory in the UAE since 2017.
- ☐ Blanket for the car seat
Tuck around — never under the harness.
- ☐ Sunshade for the car window

◆ FEEDING

- ☐ Muslin cloths (at least 4)
- ☐ Bibs
- ☐ Nursing pillow, if you use one
Not essential — folded blankets work well.
- ☐ If formula feeding: no need to pack
All Abu Dhabi hospitals provide ready-made formula bottles for your stay.

◆ NICE TO HAVE

- ☐ A small soft toy or comforter
- ☐ Your own swaddle blanket
- ☐ Nappy cream
- ☐ Cotton wool pads
Gentler than wipes for newborn skin.

BUSHRA'S TIP

Wash baby clothes once before packing, using a fragrance-free, sensitive-skin detergent.

For your *partner*

◆ PARTNER'S CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A change of clothes (and a second, just in case) | ☐ Snacks & a water bottle |
| ☐ Toiletries & deodorant | ☐ Camera (if not using a phone) |
| ☐ Phone charger | ☐ Massage oil or tennis ball |
| ☐ Cash and cards | <i>For lower-back counter-pressure.</i> |
| <i>For parking, the cafeteria, and unexpected runs.</i> | ☐ List of people to call & what to say |
| ☐ Light jacket or hoodie | |

A NOTE ON VISITORS

Abu Dhabi hospitals each have different visitor policies — some restrict numbers, some have specific visiting hours. Decide together, in advance, who will come and when. The first 24 hours are precious. It's okay to keep them small.

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When to pack, when to go

Have your bags ready by 36 weeks. Keep them somewhere visible — by the door, in the boot of the car, or where your partner can easily grab them. Babies don't always give long notice.

◆ FINAL CHECKS AT 36 WEEKS

- ☐ Confirm your hospital's admissions process and which entrance to use at night.
- ☐ Pre-register at the hospital if your insurance requires it.
- ☐ Save the hospital number, your doctor's number, and mine in your phone.
- ☐ Make sure the car seat is fitted properly — many UAE car-seat retailers will do this for free.
- ☐ Pack a snack and water in the car for the journey home.

What you forget, your partner can bring later. What you cannot replace is your sense of calm. Pack with that in mind.

*Every woman deserves
a midwife by her side.*

If you'd like personalised support preparing for your birth in Abu Dhabi — from antenatal consultations to continuous labour support — I'd love to hear from you. Book a free 15-minute discovery call and let's talk.

— Bushra

BIRTHBYBUSHRA.COM · BUSHRA@BIRTHBYBUSHRA.COM · @BIRTH_BYBUSHRA