

Newborn Shopping Checklist for India

Fifteen things you actually need before the birth — with quantities, because every other list leaves those out.

Print this and tick as you go. If you buy only what is on this page, you will be fine. Everything else can wait until the first month, by which point you will know what your baby actually needs — and what size they are actually in.

Before the birth — the genuine essentials

☐ Cotton bodysuits / jhablas, 0–3 months	6–8	Two changes a day is normal. More than 8 and you outgrow them unworn
☐ Cotton nappy cloth (langot)	12–20	Even with disposables. They become burp cloths, mopping cloths, everything
☐ Muslin swaddle cloths	4	Thin cotton, not fleece, whatever the shop says
☐ Newborn nappies	1 pack	One pack only — many babies are in size S within 2–3 weeks
☐ Cotton wool or plain water wipes	1 pack	Plain water is what a newborn bottom wants for the first weeks
☐ Baby soap or cleanser	1	One bar lasts months
☐ Coconut or mustard oil	1 small	For massage. A branded "baby oil" is not required
☐ Soft towels	2	One in the wash, one in use
☐ Cot or firm mattress	1	Firm and flat. No pillow, no bumper, no soft toys
☐ Waterproof mattress sheets	2–3	The most under-bought item on every list
☐ Mosquito net for the cot	1	Non-negotiable in most of India
☐ Nail scissors, rounded tips	1	Newborns scratch their own faces within days
☐ Digital thermometer	1	You will use it in week one
☐ Nappy rash cream	1 tube	Buy before you need it, because you need it at 2am
☐ Caps, socks, mittens	2–3 each	They get lost constantly

The number people get wrong: buy ONE pack of newborn nappies, not a carton. A newborn uses about 10 a day, so a carton feels sensible — but plenty of babies move up a size within two or three weeks, and you cannot return an opened carton.

Wait until week 2–4 — buy these once you know your baby

☐ Baby bath tub	☐ Nappies in the next size
☐ Pram or carrier	☐ Night light, if you find you need one
☐ More clothes — in the size they are in	☐ Breast pads / nursing bras, if feeding

Hospital Bag & What to Skip

Pack the bag at 36 weeks and leave it by the door.

Hospital bag — ask your hospital what they provide; many give more than you expect

For the baby

- ☐ Bodysuits × 2
- ☐ Swaddle cloths × 2
- ☐ Cap and socks
- ☐ Nappies × 4–6
- ☐ Soft towel

Paperwork

- ☐ ID and insurance card
- ☐ Hospital file
- ☐ Birth certificate forms

For the mother

- ☐ Front-open nightdresses × 2
- ☐ Dupatta or shawl
- ☐ Maternity pads
- ☐ Underwear you can ruin
- ☐ Slippers with a back
- ☐ Lip balm
- ☐ Phone charger, long cable
- ☐ Food for whoever is with you at 3am

Do not buy — roughly ₹10,000–15,000 of things that sit unused in an Indian home

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| ☐ Shoes | A baby who cannot walk does not need them. Socks with grip, or bare feet |
| ☐ Changing table | A ₹300 changing mat on any bed or floor. Nothing to fall from |
| ☐ Cot bumpers & pillows | Nothing. A suffocation risk, and sold with almost every cot anyway |
| ☐ Wipe warmer | Hold the wipe in your hand for ten seconds |
| ☐ Bulk newborn clothes | 6–8 in 0–3m. Buy 3–6m once you see how big your baby is |
| ☐ Sit-in baby walker | A push walker or stationary activity centre. See the walker guide |
| ☐ Newborn gift sets | One cleanser and one oil is the whole newborn skincare routine |

Second-hand — what is fine used, and what is not

Used is fine

- Cot — check it is firm, slats close together
- Pram or stroller
- Bath tub
- High chair
- Clothes — take every hand-me-down offered

Buy new only

- Car seat — you cannot see a past crash
- Mattress — firmness degrades, and firmness is the safety feature
- Teats and bottles

The rule behind all of it: buy what you need for the first fortnight. Wait on everything else until you have met your baby. Then you buy the right version instead of the popular one.