

Hospital Day Survival Sheet

Hospital days can feel long, emotional, and unpredictable. This page isn't about doing things the "right" way. It's here to help you get through the day with a little more steadiness and self-compassion.

You don't need to use every part of this. Take what helps and leave the rest.

What to Bring (If You Can)

You don't need much. A few small things can make a long day more manageable.

- Comfortable clothes or layers
- Phone charger or portable battery
- Water bottle and light snacks
- Lip balm or hand lotion
- Notebook or pen
- Something familiar or comforting (photo, blanket, small item)

If you forgot something, that's okay. You can still get through the day.

How to Pace Yourself

Hospital days don't have a normal rhythm. Try to think in small **pieces**, not the entire day.

- Focus on the next hour, not the whole timeline
- Sit when you can
- Eat something, even if you don't feel hungry
- Drink water regularly
- Let yourself rest during quiet moments

You don't have to stay alert every minute to be a good parent.

When It's Okay to Step Out of the Room

Many parents feel guilty leaving their baby's bedside even briefly. Stepping away does not mean you're abandoning your child.

It's okay to step out:

- During rounds if you feel overwhelmed
- If emotions start to feel too intense
- To eat, cry, stretch, or get fresh air
- When another trusted adult is present

Your baby is cared for, even when you take a moment for yourself.

Handling Conflicting Emotions

It's normal to feel many things at once.

You might feel:

- Fear and hope at the same time
- Gratitude and anger
- Relief mixed with exhaustion
- Love that feels overwhelming

There is nothing wrong with these feelings. They can exist together.

One feeling I'm noticing today:

One thing helping me get through today:

Gentle Grounding (If Things Feel Like Too Much)

Try one of these small resets:

- Take 5 slow breaths
- Place your feet flat on the floor and name 3 things you can see
- Step into the hallway for a minute
- Text one person who knows your situation

You don't have to push through everything alone.

Before You Leave Today

If it helps, write one small thing to remember:

It might be a question to ask tomorrow, a moment that mattered, or something you want to let go of.

A Gentle Reminder

You are showing up even on the hardest days.

That counts more than you know.

A Note About Photos

If you can, consider taking photos during your baby's hospital stay. This can feel emotional or overwhelming, and that's completely understandable. If it's too intense for you, it's okay to ask someone you trust to take photos for you just in case you want them later.

My parents only took a few photos of me after I was born and while I was in the hospital. As a teenager now, those photos have given me insight into the very beginning of my story. They helped me understand what I went through, where my scars came from, and how much care surrounded me from the start.

You may not want to look at the photos right away or ever and that's okay. But one day, your child might appreciate seeing them as part of understanding their own journey.

Take photos only if and when it feels right. There is no pressure, just possibility.