

Isabelle's Pregnancy + Postpartum Guide

This guide is designed to share what *I actually did* during pregnancy, and later, what helped me get through postpartum. I'm not a doctor, and this isn't medical advice. It's just my personal experience; what worked for me, the products I used, the foods I focused on, and the routines that kept me feeling like myself.

Pregnancy is hard. No one really prepares you for how much it changes your body and your mind. Postpartum (for me) was way way way harder. My goal here is to give you a real, honest look at what helped support me through each phase. From nutrition and movement to skincare and mental health. As you read through, take what feels helpful and leave the rest.

Every pregnancy and postpartum journey is different. Think of this as a resource list from a friend who's just been there.

I've divided this guide into sections so feel free to skip to the section that interests you or jump right into my FAQ and recommendations at the end!



Nutrition in Pregnancy

In my first trimester, I read a book called [Real Food for Pregnancy by Lily Nichols](#). It was recommended to me by a trusted, older friend who told me this was the only pregnancy book I'd really need, and she was right.

To briefly explain what you'll be getting into with it, this book is a clear nutrition guide that challenges conventional prenatal dietary advice by emphasizing whole, nutrient-dense foods like eggs, meat, seafood, vegetables, and healthy fats, all backed by current research. It's practical, evidence-based, and designed to help women optimize fertility, pregnancy, and postpartum recovery through food choices rather than rigid diet rules. and it completely reshaped how I looked at food during pregnancy - and still to this day!

Going into my pregnancy, I was eating about 90% plant-based vegan. After diving into that book, my own research and really tuning into my body, I began eating (a lot) more meat and eggs (still no dairy.)

One of the biggest takeaways for me was how much your body's nutritional needs truly change when you're growing a baby. Protein, iron, choline, omega-3s..... These aren't just numbers on a chart, in an app, or on the back of a supplement bottle, they're the building blocks your baby uses, and *needs*, to grow and the best way to get them is through whole foods. Prenatals are a great foundation, but I learned quickly that they can't do all the heavy lifting and real food makes such a difference.

We can't talk about pregnancy nutrition without talking about cravings... I've been asked countless times what to do about cravings and did I have any? In short, I did have cravings, and elevated hunger but my cravings tended to be for just more food rather than for specific things. I can't tell you for sure why this is, but I do think that my diet being so well rounded didn't leave my body 'craving' too much more.

A lot of people ask how I managed my weight 'so well.' To that I credit that in my third trimester, when random hunger would strike quickly, I leaned into the French pregnancy philosophy that good food and large meals belong unrestricted during the daytime but - not overnight. Having a simple structure like that to follow kept me balanced. In the evenings (after 8pm or so) I didn't feel tempted to eat through the whole pantry because I just told myself that it wasn't time for food or a meal and that my breakfast could be absolutely as much as and anything that I wanted! I think that this structure also helped my digestion a lot because having a little pause for your body to rest is important for so many of your body's functions. Within that rhythm of structured mealtimes and whole, nourishing foods I felt very good overall.

Foods I Focused On

- **Eggs:** The best source of choline, which is crucial for brain development. I ate 3 eggs each day (usually at breakfast but sometimes at lunch)
- **Red meat:** Provides heme iron (the form of iron that's easiest to absorb) and vitamin B12. Pregnancy iron needs nearly double. I actually would often cook ground beef with breakfast... don't ask me why but it was SO good.
- **Seafood (low-mercury):** Salmon for DHA, an omega-3 that supports baby's brain and eyes - talk to your doctor about which fish to eat if you are uncomfortable or unsure.

- **Vegetables and fruit:** For fiber, antioxidants, and steady energy. I've always loved fruits and vegetables so this came easily to me.
- **Healthy fats:** Avocado, nuts, seeds, and olive oil for hormone balance and satiety. I started eating and cooking with a significant amount more olive oil than before and I started feeling so much more full (in a good way) and I learned that I really love the flavor - so experiment with finding the right fats for you!
- **Hydration:** Water, water, water! Of course, if you like teas go for it - as long as you are really hydrating. There can be a tendency to feel 'heavy' especially during the later 2nd and 3rd trimesters and to avoid water during this time - also because you have to go to the bathroom so frequently during this time, but trust me, the more you can hydrate the better for baby and for you.
- **Prenatals / Supplements:** I'll leave a link of the prenatals that I took during my pregnancy for you [here](#). (I loved the autoship on these I actually took them for my first 3 months PP as well.)

Did You Know?

- About 95% of women don't get enough choline in pregnancy, yet it's one of the most important nutrients for baby's brain development. (Choline is in egg yolk, kidney / navy beans, brussel sprouts and broccoli.)
- Iron needs increase to about 27 mg/day during pregnancy—nearly double the non-pregnant requirement - iron in prenatals can make people feel queasy so I recommend taking prenatals or extra iron supplements after a big meal - I took mine after dinner each night.
- Omega-3 fatty acids (DHA + EPA) are directly linked to lower risk of preterm birth and support your baby's nervous system.

Important note!

During my first trimester, I was unbearably sick. The nausea was constant and I could barely leave the house more than once a week for about nine weeks straight. I even had to miss one of my best friend's weddings in the South of France because I was so unwell.

Needless to say, my eating during that time was truly about survival. There were days when all I could manage was potato chips or a bowl of ramen. Not everyone will have this experience in the first trimester, but if you do, please know you're not alone and you don't have to worry about nutrition as much in those first weeks.

My doctor (an NYC expert in fertility) reassured me that in the first trimester, the most important thing is just getting through it. The baby's major nutritional demands really ramp up in the second and third trimesters, which is when I started focusing on the above foods and was able to follow the book more. So if you're too sick to follow any kind of "plan," don't force it. Do what you can, eat what feels tolerable, and let that be enough!

Fitness in Pregnancy

Pregnancy looks different for everyone, and I want to share the real version of mine. Some weeks, I did nothing but rest, and other weeks I found routines that made me feel strong and steady. I didn't follow a perfect plan or stick to every piece of advice. I experimented, I adjusted, and I listened to my body. What worked for me may not work for you, but I hope that by sharing the details of my experience, you'll feel less pressure to get it "right" and more encouraged to find what works for *you*.

In my first trimester, I did absolutely nothing. I was so sick I couldn't even manage a five-minute walk most days. And that's okay. Sometimes survival is the only goal in those early weeks.

Once I started feeling better, movement became one of the things that grounded me the most. I tried to take a longer walk—about an hour—three to four times a week. Walking gave me energy, helped with circulation, and honestly just cleared my head.

At home, I followed [The Sculpt Society](#). It's an app with a full pregnancy exercise program, which I can't recommend enough. I did 2-3 sessions per week when I was up to it. The program takes you week by week through pregnancy, with safe and supportive workouts at every stage. The focus isn't on "burning calories" but on keeping your body strong and functional—especially your core and pelvic floor.

A big part of the Sculpt Society program is **360 breathing**, a deep core engagement technique. It trains you to strengthen and protect your core in a safe way during pregnancy, and it's something I still practice now postpartum. My core actually feels stronger than it did before pregnancy because of it.

I also saw a YouTube video where a woman said that just doing **bodyweight squats** 10, 20 however many you can (no more than 100) a day each day during pregnancy (again, not counting the first trimester) is a great way to keep up your large muscle strength throughout the process. If you think about it, your stomach growing is an ever increasing weight on your legs as they squat you down and lift you up. It's the perfect gradual increased resistance 'training' and since I was in leggings for the last 30 weeks of my pregnancy all day every day it was easy to do a few squats here and there while I was standing around, waiting for an elevator, waiting for my shower to heat up. I certainly didn't do squats *every* day but I tried to get a few in as often as I could and I do think that really helped me a lot!

The final note I have on what I did for exercise during my pregnancy is just '**taking the stairs**' which means taking the long way when possible. It's easy to think, "I'm pregnant so I'm going to park as close as I can to the door or take the escalator." There are certainly days when I ached, or felt tired and on those days, I *listened to my body* and remembered that **rest is as important as exercise during pregnancy**, but when I was up to it, I made it a habit to get in a little bit of extra 'non-exercise' activity whenever I could, like taking the stairs instead of an elevator if it was just a flight or two, parking farther away, saying yes to an easy and safe hike here and there etc!

Did You Know?

- Regular movement during pregnancy can reduce the risk of gestational diabetes, improve mood, and support better sleep. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends 150 minutes a week at least.
 - Pelvic floor and core-focused exercises (like 360 breathing) can speed recovery postpartum.
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Skincare, Haircare, & Beauty

Keeping up with my skincare routine (morning and night) wasn't just about skin. It was about my mental health. That small pocket of consistency and time for myself really helped me feel grounded, especially when so many other parts of my life and body felt like they were in a constant state of change.

For products, I kept it simple but I also didn't overthink every possible safety issue. For the most part, I stuck to my usual routine, minus any AHA / BHA acids, retinoids and chemical SPFs. (If there was a little bit of acid in my cleanser I didn't worry about that - cleanser doesn't tend to penetrate deeply or for long, but you have to do what makes you comfortable!) I did limit the use of most of my skincare and beauty devices—like red light therapy and microcurrent, particularly in my 1st and 2nd trimester, because there just isn't enough research on them in pregnancy. By the 3rd trimester the baby mostly just growing so I picked up my red light at that time.

Some people choose to be very cautious and only stick to products that are explicitly pregnancy-approved. For me, it was about simplifying and sticking to what I knew worked without adding in anything experimental.

My haircare routine stayed the same. I still used my usual shampoo, conditioner, and masks. The only thing I cut out was hair growth drops, since they aren't well-studied for use in pregnancy. Yes, I did get my hair highlighted (3 times to be exact) and my stylist who is well trained and has worked on many pregnant women, knew not to bring the bleach too close to my scalp, so although I never looked 'fresh out of the salon' it was better than nothing and allowed me to maintain my blonde throughout those 10 months.

Did You Know?

- **Pregnancy hormones can actually make your skin more sensitive**, which means products you tolerated before may suddenly cause irritation. When in doubt, stick to simple, hydrating and gentle products. Also, many women get acne or breakout during this time, if that happens, please don't panic or feel bad - it's all just part of the process and is all temporary.
- **Mineral sunscreen** (zinc/titanium) is the go-to for expectant mothers because it physically blocks UV rays and is considered safest during pregnancy. The good news is that *so many* brands now carry amazing physical sunscreens. I'll put my two favorites here: [Tatcha Mineral SPF 50](#) & [Caudalie Vinosun Mineral SPF](#).

- Many women notice their hair feels thicker during pregnancy—not because it's growing faster, but because hormonal shifts slow down hair shedding. While this can be very cool in the moment, remember that all of your 'new' hair might not be around forever because many women also notice hair loss around 4-6 months postpartum, so my best advice is not to pay too much attention to it so you're less emotionally impacted if it does shed down the road.
- Up to 80% of women will notice **swollen feet** during pregnancy - this can be incredibly uncomfortable, and make walking more difficult. (I was also really worried about my feet permanently growing a size - which happens to many as well!) My advice is to wear supportive sneakers daily after week 30 and compression socks ([these were my favorite](#)) for longer walks or if you're going to be up on your feet for more than an hour at a time!

Other Pregnancy Tips / Thoughts

SLEEP

- **Sleeping** while pregnant can be tough—especially in the third trimester. At some point, you'll need to switch to sleeping on your side. Some books say from the start of the second trimester, my doctor told me week 20 was fine. So check in with your doctor about timing. What *does* help is being ready with a good pregnancy pillow before you need it. I linked my favorite one from BabyBub below along with why I chose it (it really was a lifesaver for me.)
- **Taking magnesium** every night really helped me fall asleep easily and helped with any aches and pains - it also kept me regularly using the bathroom which can be quite uncomfortable for some people in the 3rd trimester.
- **Give yourself grace** when it comes to your sleep cycle and routine while you're pregnant (and always!) I used to be very regimented with my sleeping, tracking it and ensuring I had the right number of hours every night. During pregnancy, especially at the end, that was not possible. I was often awake for hours starting at 2:00am and I had to learn to just give myself grace through the process. Stressing about not sleeping is just creating another problem to deal with. If it means sleeping in on weekends or any day you can, or laying down in bed right after work - all of that is fine - you might have to adjust a bit and that's okay!

WEIGHT GAIN

- I've gotten a *lot* of DMs specifically asking me for how much I gained during pregnancy and what I think the 'right amount' is.
- The right amount for me isn't the right amount for you - every body and situation is completely different.
- The only person who can guide you through the 'right' amount of weight would be your OBGYN (if he or she is someone that you trust to be well educated and knowledgeable.) I know that some people don't gain enough weight and that can be dangerous for the baby, sometimes leading to premature birth or other complications, and others gain

weight too quickly which can also lead to various health issues as a result. Let your doctor track your personal progress and the health and stats of your pregnancy. If he or she tells you to gain more or gain less weight than the path that you're on - that's the only person who really knows and is trying to help you.

- Pregnancy can be so hard... for so many reasons... don't let weight be the thing that you focus on - instead focus on how good you feel and what you can do to help yourself feel better throughout the whole process.

NURSERY PREP (learn from my mistakes!)

- **When to start?** Some people start putting their nursery together right away, others wait until later. The truth is, most of the smaller things can come later—but the big items are worth ordering early.
 - A nursery chair (if you want one), a dresser, and a full-size crib should be at the top of your list. My chair, which I adore and use multiple times a day, took *months* to arrive because I picked a custom fabric, so don't wait too long if you want something similar!
- **How to choose a crib?** I learned the hard way that those viral convertible cribs (like Nestle or Babyletto - I got the Babyletto Yuzu) are not worth it at all.
 - The mini size is adorable, but not practical—it's heavy, hard to move, and can't really be used as a bedside bassinet. The midi size is also cute but doesn't add much value by the time your baby is ready for it. Plus, you end up building, rebuilding, and storing different pieces, only to land with a full-size crib that might not even match your vision. My advice? Skip the convertible gimmicks and just get a bedside bassinet and a full-size crib from the start.

Postpartum: Rest, Sleep + Physical Recovery

What is postpartum?

Postpartum simply means the time after giving birth. Clinically, it's often defined as the first 6 weeks after delivery. It is the period where your body goes through its most dramatic changes and healing after giving birth. It's important to note that real life postpartum lasts longer. Many experts now consider it the "fourth trimester," stretching through the first 3 months, and in truth, recovery can take a full year physically and 2-3 years mentally / hormonally (sometimes longer).

It takes over everything; physical change and healing, your hormones, sleep patterns, emotions, and even your identity also all shift. Think of it as a full body reset: organs moving back, muscles reconnecting, hormones recalibrating, and sleep being rebuilt in fragments. Some people are able to move through it 'easily' while others (like me) experience debilitating postpartum depression and or anxiety - I had both.

I wish it were talked about more - but all I can do is share my experience for you and also tell you what I wish I would have done better - because I think I went about this phase of life the wrong way which made things much more difficult for me... I'll get to that.

Sleep in the Postpartum Phase

Sleep deprivation is one of the hardest parts of early motherhood. Waking every 2–3 hours to feed is normal, but it takes a toll. Sleep becomes less about “a full night” and more about building small, restorative windows. I was lucky enough to have some help nights (not on weekends) and if you are able to make that work for you, I really think it’s worth it, but even with it, sleep is hard, so here’s what I recommend either way.

What helps:

(You’ll see as you read through this section - I feel that I did a lot of things ‘wrong’ so I’m outlining what I’ve heard works and what I wish I would have done etc.)

- **Nap when you can, not when you “should.”** Even a 20–30 minute daytime nap can improve alertness. (I didn’t do this and completely shot my nervous system as a result.)
- **Environment matters.** Blackout curtains, a sound machine, and phone off bedside can help you fall back asleep quickly between feeds. (One thing I wish I would have done better is treat myself ‘like a baby’ and to treat my own room like a ‘nursery’ and really rest at every moment in peace and quiet.)
- **Nutrition support.** Keep a water bottle and easy snacks near your bed or nursing chair—stable blood sugar can help you resettle faster. (This is something I *didn’t* do and I think it’s one of the many factors that really impacted my ability to breastfeed - my milk production entirely stopped.)
- **Find what works for you.** If you’re nursing, you’ll have to be up for every feed with your baby so maybe your partner will be able to do the diapers, and soothing after each feed. Maybe you structure it so you alternate sleeping directly next to the baby. Just know that no matter how you do it, it is extremely difficult, and feeling frustrated, upset etc. is normal - all you can do is give it your best and allow whatever emotions and feelings to come along with that.

[Here is my list of Sleep Essentials on Amazon!](#)

Physical and Mental Recovery

Your body has just done something incredible. The immediate postpartum recovery can feel painful, uncomfortable, unfamiliar, and sometimes even wildly unfair. Your partner gets to hold the baby right away, while you’re navigating one of the most challenging recovery periods you may ever face. I thought I was prepared for some of it like the bleeding, soreness, and swelling, but I wasn’t ready for the full-body night sweats, dizziness, confusion, emotional ups and downs, and anxiety. Remember, your body is healing while you’re also caring for a newborn, and on top of that your hormones are shifting and dropping. It’s a lot. Please be gentle with yourself and give yourself grace.

Also, if your emotional ups and downs last longer than three+ weeks, or they seem to be getting worse, or just not improving, please reach out for medical or psychiatric help right away. After going through terrible anxiety and depression myself, I got professional help and took antidepressants from six weeks until eleven weeks postpartum, and it made all the difference for

me. I've heard so many stories of women who didn't seek help because of the stigma, only to look back and wish they had.

What helps:

- **The first 6 weeks are for healing, not bouncing back.** Gentle walks and breath work are usually the safest starts. Build slowly and listen closely.
 - **Pelvic floor first.** Simple breathing exercises, light Kegels, and pelvic tilts can help reconnect your core and stabilize your posture.
 - **Support your core.** A postpartum support band or wrap can feel grounding, but should never replace rebuilding muscle strength.
 - **Hydrate + nourish.** Your body is repairing tissue and possibly producing milk—water, electrolytes, protein, and minerals all matter.
 - **Gentle care rituals.** Peri bottles, cooling pads, and witch hazel wipes can soothe discomfort. I know it seems like a lot but [this kit](#) is really all so important to have if it makes sense for you. I also personally wore [these](#) for weeks after giving birth.
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Recovery Timeline (approximate)

- **Week 1–2:** Rest, bleeding is heaviest, prioritize hydration, pelvic floor awareness.
 - **Week 3–4:** Short walks, breathing + gentle mobility.
 - **Week 6-8:** Medical check. This is when many women are cleared for exercise and intimacy. Note, just because you are cleared for these things doesn't mean you have to do them right away or feel rushed! TAKE YOUR TIME!
 - **Month 3+:** Healing is still ongoing, by now you should be up for more 'normal' exercise routines and will likely feel energy day to day which is great. If you don't feel that way by this time I would reach out to your OB or doctor to confirm that everything is fine for you physically.
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Gentle Reminder

Postpartum recovery is not linear. Some days you'll feel energized, others you'll feel like you've been hit by a truck. Both are normal. Give yourself grace. Prioritize rest over "getting back." You created a human being. That's the most important work your body will ever do.

Quick Answers to Most Asked Questions

What specific skincare did you use?

[Here is the link to the specific products I used while I was pregnant.](#)

Did your skin change while pregnant?

Not really, I thought I might break out from the hormones, which is something I had seen a lot of online, but I didn't happen for me. I've heard girl pregnancies can cause more skin issues than boy pregnancies, but don't quote me on that. Regardless, no matter what your skin does while you're pregnant or in postpartum just remember that it's temporary. Try to focus on how you feel more than how you look!

What did you use for stretch marks?

I applied body oil to my full body once a day in the first trimester, twice a day in the second, and three times a day in the third. [This was my favorite body product](#) - I know it's pricey but it was really worth it to me. (Code "ISABELLE15" to save 15%)

Did you stay active? What workouts did you do?

Walking daily, light strength, prenatal yoga. After birth, short walks, breath work, pelvic floor, then strength once cleared.

What did you eat while pregnant and postpartum?

In my first trimester and postpartum I really struggled to eat balanced whole meals - no matter where you are or how you're feeling it's important to give yourself grace. During my 2nd and 3rd trimesters I really ate a LOT of organic protein, like grass fed beef, pasture raised chicken and eggs, & salmon. I also focused on vegetables, fruit and whole grains like quinoa, rice and potatoes. Most of my food was cooked at home.

How was the glucose test for you?

You'll see a lot of glucose test horror stories on Tiktok and Instagram. I asked my doctor beforehand if I could take my own glucose test with them rather than drinking their pre-mixed bottles. I'll put the [exact one I used here](#).

Important note: Even if you take your own test you have to fast beforehand and do it at the doctor's office and wait there - in the same way that you would if you were drinking their pre-mixed bottles. You will also likely need to bring with you the exact right amount of water for mixing your glucose solution into while you're there.

I ate lots of healthy fats the day before the test and right after finishing it to help rebalance my blood sugar!

Did you drink coffee or energy drinks?

I drank 1 large half-decaf latte a day throughout my pregnancy (which is about 80-110mg of caffeine) I personally found that the 'ritual' and flavor of coffee was more important to me than the caffeine boost so even a full decaf coffee in the morning made me feel ready for the day.

What vaccines did you get while pregnant?

I got my RSV shot as well as a covid booster and flu shot for the year.

To my knowledge, the covid and flu shots were just what made me feel the most comfortable (I really wanted to be sure to avoid anything that could give me high fevers while pregnant) but the RSV vaccine is extremely important to get in order to protect your newborn in the first 6+ months of their life.

Do you have a list of all of your pregnancy favorites?

Yes! I made a list on [Amazon](#) of my favorites that I used throughout pregnancy. If you have any other specific questions or if you think I missed something send me a DM on IG!

How did you “bounce back” so quickly?

Please remember that looking like you bounced back, whatever that means, and actually feeling like yourself again are two very different things. It's really important to do the best that *you* can and focus on your mental health as well as your physical health which was something I really didn't do enough of and I regret deeply. With that, in terms of physically, I focused on consistency with my routines during pregnancy, eating whole foods and staying active even throughout my 3rd trimester really helped. I focused a lot on *deep core strengthening with '360 breathing'* and I walked / took the stairs as often as I could.

What surprised you the most about postpartum?

There were a lot of unexpected aspects of postpartum for me. I've already gone over in the main section above about the tremendous anxiety and depression that I fell into, but I also really was surprised by: night sweats, the duration of bleeding after, not being able to sit in a chair comfortably for a week or so, not being able to walk at a normal pace for 2-3 weeks, the weakness of my pelvic muscles, and the gas / tummy troubles that I had with my digestion for nearly a month!

A lot of people also say that using the bathroom is very hard after giving birth and takes up to a week or more to pass a BM - I never had this problem, I stayed very regular during pregnancy and right after birth too because I regularly took my [magnesium](#) before bed and stayed VERY hydrated.

FOR BABY - Links & Favorites

I don't know if every mom spends 10,000 hours researching every single product—but I did. Looking back, I wish someone I trusted had just handed me a list and saved me the trouble. So below, I'm sharing my baby favorites and essentials, along with a few bullet points on why I chose and love each one. That way, you can see what my priorities were when deciding—and hopefully it helps you figure out if the same products will be right for you and your new little one.

[ALPHABETICAL]

Baby Clothing [Pajamas]

(I am very particular about only using 100% cotton clothing especially pajamas so these are my favorites)

[LITTLE ME BOYS & LITTLE ME GIRLS](#)

- Absolutely DARLING designs.
- They don't stretch out or get messed up in the wash no matter how many times you wash them
- Be aware that they run QUITE large - I recommend just getting them in your favorite styles for all the various ages and your baby will fit into them when they fit into them!

[Carters](#) are also great for pajamas, just make sure the ones you buy are 100% cotton if that's important to you because not all of them are.

Bedside Basinet ([Maxi Cosi](#))

- If you read through the above sections, you'll know I didn't have a bedside basinet. Instead I went with a convertible crib that went from mini -> midi -> full size. Big mistake! This is the bedside basinet that should have gotten.

- Maxi Cosi is a great German brand that makes really high quality, functional and long lasting pieces
- I have a [Travel Basinet & Play Crib](#) from Maxi Cosi for my mother's apartment in NYC and we loved it so much Jonas bought another one for our two week trip to Europe over the summer of 2025 when Hansel was 6 months old.

Bottles ([Pigeon Glass Baby Bottles](#))

- Spoke to many doctors and lactation consultants to find the most 'nipple like' bottles these were by far the best, ultra soft nipple
- Japanese design / research
- Nipple shape encourages wide mouth position and allows jaw/tongue to work optimally
- Lots of nipple 'sizes' for as baby grows so the milk flows at different based based on your needs
- I started with the plastic ones but quickly realized there was a glass option so switched over to that

Bottle Washer / Sanitizer ([Momcozy Bottle Washer Pro](#))

- Easily fits 4 bottles, lots of accessory cleaning room on top
- Very quiet, thorough and aesthetic
- Quick cycle and complete drying function
- Be sure to buy the little 'soap' capsules with it
- Biggest 'competitor was the BabyBrezza but from talking to a lot of moms, momcozy cleans better and looks better)

Bottle Water Warmer ([Baby Brezza Pro](#))

- Full disclosure, we started using this for making the bottles until my postpartum anxiety kicked in BIG TIME (around wee 7) and I decided I wanted to mix the formula scoops into the water myself so we truly just use this as a warm water dispenser which seems a bit wasteful but I still love it, the tank holds a lot of water and we've NEVER had trouble with it... the dispensing is very accurate and having the warm water on hand at the push of a button dispensed is amazing
- This new white pro color is new - ours is black - there was no white option when we bought it but I would have 100% gotten white if I could have
- Be sure to read the instructions clearly if you're going to use it for formula mixing so you have it on the right 'code' setting since each formula is a little different!)

Bouncy Chair ([Baby Bjorn Bouncer Bliss](#))

- I know a lot of people compare this to the Ergobaby which is more affordable but they are not the same at all - Baby Bjorn is more 'flexible' and bouncy so it allows the baby to really use it for a LONG time (hansel is still using it at 7.5 months and he's a very big baby) whereas Ergobaby is really more suited for smaller babies because of the structure of it
- Very comfortable even for newborn, also great as baby gets older
- Easy to clean in the washing machine
- Great size and relatively cute

Detergent ([Molly Suds Baby Fragrance Free](#))

- Very simple ingredients
- Effective at cleaning (I mean it gets everything out)
- Fragrance Free
- I love / trust Molly Suds they've never done me wrong personally

Diapers ([Coterie](#))

- Very easy to have on autoship
- Absorbent and made without dyes / fragrances

- THE BEST WIPES ON EARTH - we especially love the 'replenish' dark blue wipes... we have truly tried every single brand
- There have been a few times where we've ordered a size too big of coterie and I've run to CVS for Huggies / Pampers - those are also great - I haven't had any trouble with any of them so keep that in mind.

Diaper Rash Creams:

Babo Botanical

- Great for 'real' diaper rash - very thick
- Without unnecessary ingredients / fragrance
- Zinc based

Aquaphor

- Great for daily changes - especially during newborn til 3m when the baby is pooping frequently
- You can get, but don't need 'Aquaphor Baby' the normal one is equal and you'll save \$\$
- Don't get the tub, get the large tube - you'll be surprised how often you use it and the tub is more hygenic

High Chair [for 6+ Months] (Bugaboo Giraffe)

- This was probably my MOST researched baby item except for the formula
- Main considerations, easy to clean, comfortable and with an ultra adjustable footrest (foot rest position is very important for baby's spinal development and comfort - many highchairs only have a few heights)
- Easy to tuck up against dining table for family meal times
- Aesthetically pleasing - important because it's so big / in your space (Designed in Amsterdam)
- Safe and good quality materials and craftsmanship

Formulas:

Holle Bio Pre (we used from birth -> 7 months)

- Our primary formula (we started using it at week 2 when I wasn't making enough milk and switched to exclusively formula at week 10ish)
- Closest nutrients / consistency to breastmilk
- Great ingredients, very meticulous formula
- We chose the made in germany kind
- Drawback is that it's very pricey and shipping can take a LONG TIME - we only ordered from this importing website a few times, mostly we were able to get it shipped from friends living in Germany which was much more affordable until the tariffs messed that system up)
- Cow based

ByHeart

- Our formula choice from 7 months onward
- Much easier to get in the United States (no fear of will we run out etc)
- Still pricey but worth it - best ingredients we found from an American formula
- Cow based

Lotion (Weleda Fragrance Free)

- Very moisturizing but safe for babies with very sensitive skin (we tried a lot of brands)
- Environmentally friendly ingredient sourcing / organic
- Made either in Germany or Switzerland (the one on amazon is from Switzerland but we just stock up whenever we go to Germany)
- Get this purple fragrance free one, not the yellow one

Nursery Chair ([Pottery Barn Dream Power Recliner](#))

- I wanted a recliner so I could nap easily with the baby in the nursery, but we were working with a somewhat small space so I prioritized having the space at full recline being the smallest, and of the Pottery Barn chairs available at the time, this one was the most comfortable with the most compact recline)
- If you are going to get a reclining chair I recommend getting a power recliner - the manual ones seem simple but are VERY hard to reset back to a sitting position and when you're tired or holding a sleeping baby it's the last thing you're going to want to do
- I wanted a 'special' material on mine, which is beautiful but it took 5 months to arrive so if you want one that isn't 'ready to ship' you should be prepared to order WELL in advance
- I also don't think a recliner is necessary but a nice big, supportive and roomy armchair (with wide arms) will be a real savior - I spend 3x more time in my nursery chair than I had even imagined

Pregnancy Pillow - [BabyBub](#)

- I tried EVERY type of pregnancy pillow - the 'long bean' pillow never worked well for me but that doesn't mean it won't work well for you
- I realized I wanted this double sided wedge that would allow me to easily flip from side to side (VERY IMPORTANT TO ME)
- I tried a few on Amazon because I wanted fast shipping and they were not good: uneven foam, weird smell, not supportive enough...
- This BabyBub pillow was wonderful - it lasted me from week 18 all the way til I gave birth at week 39
- The extra little tiny pillow that comes with it was VERY comfortable (I often put it in my bra between my boobs and I still use that piece to this day)

Prenatal Vitamin ([Ritual Lemon Flavor](#))

- I took a lot of different prenats in my first trimester (Thorne, Pink Stork, Nature Made At least one other but I can't find it now) and I found that I felt sick with each one except for Ritual
- Note: Ritual has high DHA (yay) but I got 'fishy burps' the first week or so that I took them... I read online that the best way to avoid that is to take them AFTER dinner - it worked perfectly for me to do it that way and I took them after my last meal of the day all the way through my pregnancy.

Pump [Electric] ([Electric Spectra 1](#))

- Spectra 1 is hospital / medical grade pumping
- Don't be fooled by the name / color (a lot of people get the spectra 2 which is pink thinking its cuter / newer... its not... the pink one is corded to the wall whereas the blue one is chargeable and you can take it anywhere around the house with you)
- You will REALLY want a bra that allows the pumps to be held up securely to use this but there are so many on amazon just find one that looks like the right shape for you)

Pump [Manual] ([Hand Pump Madela Harmony](#))

- Very comfortable to use (you might want some other flange inserts to really fit it to your nipple size)
- Easy, lightweight and simple
- Seamless cleaning (just one little device to clean)
- Great for on the go or travel

Shampoo / Body Wash ([Mushie Baby Shampoo & Body Wash](#))

- Gentle, simple ingredients
- Fragrance free *be sure to get the 'fragrance free' not the 'lavender'*
- Made in Denmark (stricter regulations than the US companies)

Stroller [Car Seat] [Nuna Pipa RX](#)

- I chose this carseat after doing a large comparison of the weight and safety ratings. This seat is the lightest that I found of the safest seats in crash tests
- It is very secure and has an extra 'leg' that holds it in place.
- **WHAT ABOUT THE LARGER STROLLER ITSELF??** I *should* have just gotten the coordinating stroller for this, but instead I went for aesthetics and got a bassinet from AngelCab (a German company - I don't recommend it, although it's BEAUTIFUL it's heavy, bulky, took months to arrive, poor customer service and requires an adaptor attachment to make it work with the Nuna infant carseat. Not to mention the actual 'stroller' attachment is not very functional or versatile)

Stroller ([Doona Midnight Edition](#))

- Extremely easy to maneuver through the streets
- Folds up so quickly for getting in and out of a car
- Also great for travel - EASILY buckles into the back of an Uber or other car without the base
- We chose the 'midnight edition' because I liked the all black look and it comes with a GREAT 'diaper bag' that has actually replaced my old diaper bag - it just clicks onto the front so easily
- Travels extremely easily through airport and in other countries (we've taken it to Germany, Austria, France etc)

Sunscreen ([Babo Botanicals Baby Mineral SPF](#))

- Extremely gentle, safe ingredients
- Mineral sunscreen
- Well established organic baby-safe brand

Travel Essentials [Changing Mat] ([Copi Baby](#))

- Very practical... is it ugly, yes... but it is what you need
- Fits everything securely, has a place for wipes that you refill yourself, diapers, creams etc.
- Very easy to clean
- Folds up compactly - I just keep this under our stroller 100% of the time and it's easy to pack for travel

Travel Essentials [Formula Dispenser] - [Termichy](#)

- Very secure to travel with formula
- Holds a lot but is still compact for travel
- Has a little 'ledge' for even scoops
- Lots of cute simple colors available

Thoughts etc....

For pumps, there is SO much marketing and so many different products especially wearables - every single person I've ever spoken to about milk pumping has said they've bought the wearable pumps thinking it would be easier (like the momcozy etc) but in fact, they're VERY uncomfortable, not very effective, really tug down on the breast, difficult to clean and a lot of extra 'work' I really recommend just going with the old school CLASSIC two pumps listed above.

For baby clothing, spend less on the 'fancy' clothing and more on pajamas - everyone said that to me and I had to learn that lesson the hard way I wasted so much money on fancy clothing that was entirely unworn!

FOR MOM - Links & Favorites

Body Oil: [MUTHA Body Butter](#) (code: ISABELLE15 to save \$\$)

- This is pricey but I used it throughout the later part of my 2nd trimester into my 3rd trimester and then every day for the first 2 months PP
- I still use it now but not every single day

Mineral sunscreens (pregnancy safe):

- [Tatcha Mineral SPF 50](#)
- [Caudalie Vinosun Mineral SPF](#)

Prenatal (and PP) Workout App: [The Sculpt Society](#)

- Great workouts and pregnancy program (very easy and short)
- I wasn't super regular with these but when I did them it felt great and was very worth it to me to have the app for them when I was in the mood
- (get 1 month free with my link!)

Postpartum Recovery Essentials: [Frida Mom Kit](#)

- All of these 'tools' felt unnecessary to me before giving birth but my first day home I bought them all and they helped me SO much

Postpartum Underwear: [Rael](#)

- I wore these for WEEKS after giving birth I'm not ashamed to admit
- A lot of brands (I tried them) sell PP underwear that has fragrance in them and feel kind of plastic-y, these felt soft and comfortable
- 100% organic cotton

[Shoehorn](#)

- I know it sounds ridiculous and unnecessary but even with all of my mobility work and exercise I wasn't able to put my sneakers on at the end of pregnancy without this