**A “Newborn Baby Registry” Checklist for Natural-Minded Parents**

1. **Breastfeeding gear**: For mamas returning to work, invest in a good pump and quality bottles or cups. You may need nursing pads while your baby establishes a good milk supply – try cloth ones instead of disposable to lessen the amount of packaging and waste.
2. **A baby carrier**: some parents prefer a stretchy wrap like the Moby, others like the continuing usefulness of a soft-structured carrier like the Ergo. But most everyone agrees, it is *so* nice to have the ability to carry baby *and* have your hands free to do other things.
3. **A car seat**: if you drive, then you’ll need a good car seat. Check the following sites for information on car seat safety ratings, and be sure to have your seat installed properly and learn how to position your baby in it correctly: NHTSA Child Safety Seat Ease of Use Ratings,NHTSA Child Safety, Car-Seat.org.
4. **Diapers**: whether you decide to go with cloth diapers or ecologically friendly disposable ones, you’ll need something to catch urine and poo – even if you’re doing elimination communication! If you’re not sure what type of cloth diapers are right for your family, check out these posts on Natural Parents Network: Choosing the Right Cloth Diaper: So Many Diapers, One Tiny Bum and The Ultimate Cloth Diapering Shopping List.
5. **Diapering gear**: to maximize your earth-friendliness, consider cloth wipes and wet bags/cloth diaper pail liners. You will want something to wipe baby’s bottom and put the dirties in (washing the diaper pail after each use is not very fun). And as you’ll read in the list below, you probably already own all you need for cloth wipes, wipe spray, and a diaper pail!
6. **Baby clothes**: while your little nakey baby *will be* the cutest thing you have ever, ever seen, chances are you’ll need to dress him at some point. We found that infant gownswere the easiest thing to get our babe in and out of, and they give easy access for diaper changes.
7. **A good thermometer**: preferences vary on what kind of thermometer is “best,” but many parents like temporal read thermometers because they are easy to use and accurate.
8. **Baby nail clippers**: my son is three years old, and his fingers are *still* too small for adult nail clippers. Baby nail clippers are definitely on my must-have list, although one mama on my Facebook page said adult clippers worked fine for her.
9. **A snot sucker**: this would probably not be on everyone’s must-have list, but it’s on mine. We got a Nosefrida when Kieran was a wee babe, and it is amazing. It is gentler on baby’s nose than your typical nasal bulb (it doesn’t go inside or damage the sensitive skin in the nostrils), and it is more effective.

**Baby Gear that You Probably Already Own (So Psst . . . Don’t Buy It!)**

1. **A carry-all/diaper bag**: we didn’t buy anything special for Kieran – we just used an old backpack. The dividers were great for carrying my things and baby’s things, and it was useful for those early days when Kieran was constantly in a front carry in either the Moby or the ring sling – I didn’t have to fiddle with keeping a bag over my shoulder.
2. **Diapering gear**: as I mentioned above, you probably already own much of the diapering gear you’ll need. For cloth wipes, simply cut up excess flannel receiving blankets, discarded flannel sewing material, or old t-shirts (these are also all good materials to use for burp cloths). For a diaper pail, all you really need is a trash can with a well-fitting lid, no need to buy something fancy. For wipe spray, I use a solution of water (about 3 cups), a couple drops of tea tree oil and a few drops of lavender oil. I have a few reusable spray bottles – one to carry in the backpack, one to use at home, and one for back-up. Many mamas just wet their wipes with water – no essential oils needed, and no wipe warmer needed if you use warm water.
3. **Breastfeeding gear**: if you find yourself in need of cloth nursing pads, Hobo Mama has a tutorial for making your own from fabric you have at home. For nursing help, many mamas are content using a regular pillow instead of buying a special nursing pillow – it depends a lot on your body and your back. And if you’re still feeling shy about nursing in public, there’s no need to buy nursing covers: just use a soft blanket (receiving blankets work well) until you gain confidence and baby perfects her latch. Many mamas swear by commercially made breastfeeding salves and creams, but you can also research morenatural remedies for sore, cracked nipples, like homemade rice packs you can pop in the microwave.
4. **A place for baby to sleep**: have you researched the benefits of cosleeping? There’s really no need for a fancy crib if you can safely keep baby in your own bed. Check out Natural Parents Network’s “Ensure Safe Sleep” resource page for more information.

**Practical Things to “Register” for Instead**

1. **Frozen meals**: ask your friends and family to donate to your deep freeze, because you will not feel like cooking for awhile. Have a variety of healthy and easy to prepare frozen dinners available for the first two to three weeks.
2. **Help around the house**: if someone wants to visit you and the baby and asks you what she can bring, tell her that you’d love help with laundry. Or vacuuming. Or whatever other chore you cannot get to with a baby who nurses around the clock. Your friends will be glad to lend a hand in exchange for snuggle time!
3. **A few hours of childcare**: if you have older children, ask some of the parents of your children’s friends if they’d be willing to host a play date for a couple of hours once a week after baby arrives. Your older children will benefit from time with their friends, and it will give you some much needed rest.
4. **A childbirth education class**: especially for first time parents, it can help to be exposed to the natural process of labor and birth so that you have an idea of what to expect. There are some amazing childbirth education classes available: Hypnobabies, Bradley, and others will prepare you emotionally while your body prepares itself physically.
5. **A doula**: whether you opt for a doula who can help you during labor or one who is available after your birth for help with post-partum necessities, doulas can be lifesavers!