

Dr. Sally Segel's Newborn Must-Have List

[Better women](#) than I have already posted their baby gear lists -- I don't really have a list of my own, at least not by design. When it comes down to it, I'll be able to tell Eden she was raised by a village (or at least equipped by one), because I was completely, utterly unprepared for her birth. On second thought, I'd better wait until her 30s or she's pregnant before sharing that bit of information.

But back to the list. On my last day in the hospital, when I was told I was being discharged a day before I thought I would be discharged, I freaked. Completely lost it. I'd only been off the magnesium sulfate for about 14 hours, and I'd only had Eden in the room for 12 of those hours. And they were throwing me (and this helpless little baby) to the wolves? I had a total hormone and panic fueled meltdown.

Enter [Dr. Segel](#), the perinatologist who delivered Eden, who came in to check on me pretty much at the height (depth) of my hysteria.* She asked what was wrong -- "I'm completely unprepared!" I sobbed.** She sat down, pulled out a blank progress record sheet and started making a list. As a mother, she said, not as a doctor -- this was what worked for her.

So with a few annotations, here's her list:

1. **Car Seat.** She recommended anything that would snap into a base station. We ended up going with the [Graco SafeSeat](#). It's more expensive than the Snuggly, but it's easier to adjust and can be used up to 30 pounds. I'm trying to avoid having to purchase another car seat before Oregon law permits Eden sit face forward.

I did not want a car seat that was covered with goofy drawings; I opted for one that is black/gray/red. My briefcase is red. And yes, that was important to me -- I am half Southern.

2. **Diapers.** She recommends Pampers Swaddlers, and I do, too. Eden started out with P/S (preemie/small), then migrated up to N(ewborn), and a couple of weeks back was able to start wearing size 1. The P/S diapers don't have the mesh that really protects from wetness, unfortunately, so she didn't stay in them long. And only buy a couple of boxes, because they really do grow quickly -- you'd hate to be stuck with a lot of diapers you can't use.

I will be heartbroken when she outgrows Swaddlers, because they're mostly white and

- aren't completely covered with garish cartoon drawings. Do babies really care if they have Barney (or whatever) on their bums?
3. **Baby Wipes.** Pampers Sensitive wipes are recommended, but I like the Kirkland Wipes from Costco (thank you, Sue, for the box!). The Sensitive wipes also aren't as great at cleaning, I don't think. They are great for wiping down her face and hands, though!
 4. **Balmex diaper cream.** I like it. American Baby had a coupon in the last issue, too.
 5. **Washcloths.** Many. Yes. We always use one when we feed her, to wipe dribbles, and could burp her with them for quite a while.
 6. **Baby bathtub.** She very strongly recommends the [PrimoBathtub](#), which can be ordered from Amazon.com. We ended up getting a [bathtub from Target](#) which we like pretty well; for one, we weren't hot on bending down to bathe her in the tub (we have one bathtub in the house, in the back upstairs bathroom, and it would be awkward enough for one person to stand by), so we wanted something that would sit in our kitchen sink. I can see the attraction of the Primo tub, though -- if we had a better set up, I'd want one.
 7. **Baby bath soap and baby lotion.** Johnson and Johnson lavender scented soap, lotion, and one-use washcloths I like the bath soap, but the lotion is strong smelling -- but it does do the trick (and is wonderful on my hands, too).
 8. **Mylicon,** dye-free. Yes. I've [posted on it](#) before.
 9. **Burp cloths** -- yes, and cloth diapers are the way to go. She was so tiny in the beginning we'd just use washclothes, but now that we can actually put her on our shoulders to burp her, the diapers are must-haves. (I would add that if you're bottle feeding, always use a bib -- you will change outfits much less frequently!)
 10. **Baby towels with hood.** I have an abundance of these. Matthew and Sarah bought a couple, my mother bought us one or two, my aunt bought us a nice big fluffy Carter's towel with hood, and my next-door neighbor bought us a Pottery Barn Kids towel with rabbit ears, which is comparable to the fluffy Carter's towel.

I use the lighter towels in conjunction with the fluffy ones -- the lighter towels are more absorbent and easier on her skin, so I'll wrap her in one of those initially, then wrap her up in the larger towel for warmth.

11. **Baby grooming set.** The must-have would be nail clippers. You can use a soft toothbrush on their hair initially (and we did). I suppose it helps if you have a mostly bald baby, as we do! Eden has a beautiful silver soft brush now, courtesy of Sarah's mother-in-law. We don't clip Eden's nails yet -- Matthew uses emery boards (no metal) to file them, instead.
12. **Baby Papasan.** I ignored this on my list, but as mentioned previously, my friend Nikki took matters into her own hands and bought us the papasan and matching swing. This will be the best \$200 (collectively) you've ever spent. Do not begrudge the number of batteries you have to purchase (or buy rechargeables). Eden has probably spent 60-75% of her sleeping time in one or the other of these since she was brought home.
13. **Layette** -- receiving blankets, onesies, and so on. Friend LuAnn supplied most of Eden's receiving blankets from the Amy Coe Peanut set -- the blanket is SO soft -- and we were given beautiful quilts by friends Mary Ann, Carla, and my grandmother. Sarah's MIL found a lovely crocheted throw that we use on warm days (when it's 100 outside, even with A/C our upstairs bedroom gets to 75). The care letter Mary Ann enclosed with her quilt got me over my initial fear of using quilts on a day-to-day basis, and Eden usually plays on the quilts.

Eden was way too small for the clothes we had, so we had to do a little preemie shopping. Babies-r-us has some preemie clothing, and our local baby boutique did, too. The only socks that fit Eden were the ones she wore home from the hospital, and we had a hard time keeping those on her. (Actually, we still can't keep socks on her, and her feet are not tiny.)

You won't need to buy much by way of clothing, especially if you're having a girl. Everyone loves buying baby clothing, and little girl clothing is too cute for words. Even men my husband works with (or used to work with!) have bought Eden clothing. I couldn't begin to thank everyone who has clothed Eden over the past months, at least not without consulting my thank-you list. Plus, friend Nikki decided to pay my retainer in a business matter in baby clothes, so Eden is set for the next 18 months or so.

On days when we are staying at home, I keep Eden in body suits (with or without feet). She wears the really cute outfits and dresses when she goes out or when someone is watching her. I was mortified the other day when we took her out in a sleeper, until Matthew pointed out most people do not dress their 9 week old babies up for a trip out to Togos and the bank. What can I say? Half Southern. (Dr. Segel noted at our

appointment last week that Eden and I matched -- we both wore brown. "Was that on purpose?" she asked. "Um....yes." Not to say that I think of her as an accessory, but since I was wearing brown, it was what seemed right for her to wear that day.)

14. **Dreft.** This is the super-mild detergent that's baby safe. We used it for the first two months, and now use All sans-dyes and scent. We set the washer to double rinse, instead -- given what babies produce on their clothing, I wasn't sure Dreft and hot water were going to cut it.

To this list, I'll add the following:

1. **Play yard.** (I still want to call it a play pen). We have a two-story house, and although we live mostly on the upper story (where our bedroom, the den-soon-to-be-nursery, and computer room are), my home office setup and the kitchen are downstairs. I have a play yard behind my desk, where she can sleep while I'm working. Opt for the sort with a changing table attachment for more convenience.
2. **Swanky diaper bag.** [Mine](#) is Teflon and Aglon coated, has a memory foam changing pad, and best of all, has red in it (to match the aforementioned briefcase). (I did pre-order the matching "[BeMine](#)" and "[BeQuick](#)," too.) It makes me feel better about carrying a diaper bag to begin with.
3. **Stroller.** Even when Eden was still 5 pounds, I couldn't easily lug around the carseat with her in it. We have a stroller frame for the SafeSeat (thank you, Cheri!) I have no idea what I'm going to do for a "real" stroller yet. I want something very light and maneuverable that I can set up one-handed -- no SUV-like monstrosities -- that looks good and can be used until she's at least three. Any suggestions?
4. **[Diaper Genies.](#)** We have two: [Suzie](#) gave us one, then we decided we had to have a second for the downstairs. They work so well that Norris isn't even terribly interested in the diapers inside. I'm thinking that after we no longer need them for the baby, I'll use them instead of the small pail in the backyard for dog poop. No, it's not environmentally responsible, but it makes my life easier.
5. **Waterproof changing/lap pads.** I didn't even know what they were until my mother sent a bunch. They are very, very convenient.
6. **Baby monitors.** It's not a necessity, but it is great for peace of mind/convenience. We opted for an [inexpensive The First Years](#) monitor with two hand-held receivers. The static is annoying (but with all of our electronic gear, who can say if it's the monitor or the gear?) and they work much better plugged in that on battery power, but we keep one in the computer room and one downstairs.

7. **Baby gates.** Not for the baby, not yet, but for the dog. Norris was kicked out of the bedroom for the first time in his life and was severely restricted from access to the baby until I could get used to the idea of him around the baby (I didn't want him picking up on my fear) and until he was used to the baby. Now our biggest problem is Norris pulling blankets off the baby and running up and nosing her or licking her head when she cries (which stops the swing, which really wakes her up).

You may have noticed "crib" and "changing table" don't appear on the list. You don't need them, at least not to start off with. We have a borrowed bassinet, which Eden used initially but now rarely does; she sleeps in the papasan, swing, or on our bed (this will probably end in the near future). Now that we have a local Ikea, we'll probably buy a crib there in the next couple of months.

I still don't have a changing table, and probably won't purchase one unless there's something at Ikea that looks good and has a use other than "changing table." (Eden doesn't have a dresser, because we've organized her closet to the max with [CUBEicles](#) and collapsible bins - no dresser needed.) I use waterproof pads and change her on our bed or on the play yard changing area.

You may have noticed I care about how this stuff looks. No, I am not one of those women who will not let the child play in the living room for fear of making a mess. However, I am one of those women who wants the child to look nice while she is making that mess in the living room. If I could buy her baby [Eileen Fisher](#), I would.

But...I used to swear that the only way I'd have a baby was if I could have no plastic stuff in my house. Well, THAT isn't possible (and I'll admit that plastic is awfully easy to clean), but the point was I didn't want a lot of cheap looking junk everywhere. So I do care about what her gear looks like, because I figure if I'm happy with it, I'm more likely to use it and not get irritated with it every time I look at it.

*On my discharge notes, I saw that "anxiety" was tacked on to the end of my diagnoses. Fair enough, I guess, though because I looked so awful on that day, every time Dr. Segel sees me, she tells me how wonderful I look -- like a different person. Sure. ANYTHING looks better than how I looked that day. And so every time she says that, I get reminded of how awful that day was.

**I was also terrified Norris would attack/eat the baby.