

What to pack for hospital

Less than you think — you'll live in a gown, the room is warm, and the hospital provides the serious equipment. Here's the practical list, plus what to leave at home.

Preparing and waiting

Educational draft. Clinical review pending. Quotations retained from the original text are not verified member testimonials.

Packing for a cardiac admission is mostly about comfort and calm, not gear. The hospital provides the important equipment — your job is a small bag that makes the days easier: a charger, your own pillow if that helps you, and the one thing you always read. Most people overpack, then live out of the bottom half of the bag.

The essentials

- Documents: your ID, insurance or health card, and a written list of your medications — names and doses, written by you or from your pharmacy. (Don't bring the medicines themselves unless the team told you to.)
- Phone, charger, and a long charging cable — the socket is usually far from the bed.
- Glasses and hearing aids, with their cases. You'll need them more than you think.
- Toiletries in small sizes: toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, deodorant — no strong scents; the ward is a shared place.
- Lip balm and moisturiser. Hospital air is dry.
- Loose clothes for going home — the outfit you arrived in is often not the one you want to leave in.
- Comfortable, slip-on shoes. You'll be walking the corridor in them.
- Something to do with your hands and mind: a book, earphones, a puzzle. The waiting is real, even inside the hospital.

For our part of the world, also consider

- A small prayer mat and a copy of the Quran, if that's your practice — many wards are used to it, and it steadies many of us.
- Earplugs and an eye mask. Wards are louder and brighter than any hotel, at every hour.
- A list of people to call — and someone at home who has a copy of it.

Leave at home

- Jewellery, watches, and valuables. Wedding ring: ask your team — many people are advised to leave it at home too.
- Large amounts of cash.
- Laptops and documents you'd hate to lose. The bag goes where you go, but why carry the risk?

For the person who comes with you

They need their own small kit: water, a snack, their charger, and more patience than anyone should have to pack. Tell them the visiting rules the team gave you, and give them permission to go home and rest — the long corridor waits are harder on them than on you, in their own way.

The night before

- Check the list once, then stop. Packing anxiety is real, but the list is short.
- Charge the phone, wash, and sleep as well as you can.
- Follow the team's instructions about food and drink exactly — and if you accidentally eat when fasting was required, tell them in the morning. Hiding it is the only real mistake.

Take it to your team

Ask before admission: what does the hospital provide (gown, toiletries, meals)? What should I bring that they don't supply? Do I bring my own medications or continue as prescribed there? And can I keep my phone in the ward?

Call for help if

On admission morning — you have new chest pain, a fever, or anything that feels different from your usual symptoms. Call the team before you leave home, and again when you arrive. Also if you're told to fast and you've eaten: tell them, don't hide it. They can adjust the plan; they can't adjust a secret.

My wife packed me two books, a charger, and my own pillow. The pillow was the best decision of the three. Nobody tells you how much of the day in hospital is just... waiting for the next thing.

A last word

The bag is the easy part — and packing it well is a small act of kindness to your future self. Whatever else happens, the medical decisions belong to your own team; your job is to arrive rested, comfortable, and holding the one thing that calms you.

Questions to take to my team

☐ What does the hospital provide, and what should I bring?

☐ Should I bring my own medicines, and who will manage them during admission?

☐ Can I keep my phone and use my usual hearing or mobility aids on the ward?

For discussion and personal reference. Your care team's individual instructions take priority. For an emergency, contact your local emergency service; do not wait for a community reply.