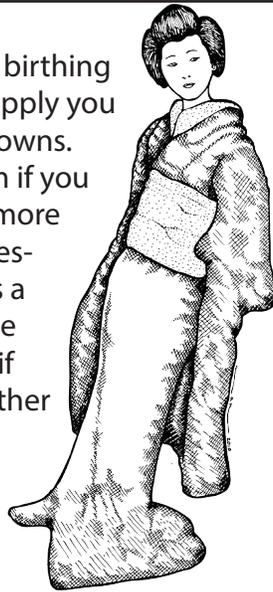


# Hospital Heavy-Hitters

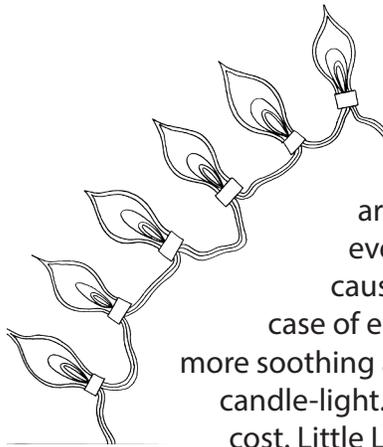
Some oft-forgotten, but CRUCIAL things to include when you pack

**Your own gown or robe:** If you're birthing in a hospital, they will of course supply you with the standard issue hospital gowns. Two, if you like! (to cover your bum if you walk the halls) Some women feel more comfortable in their own clothes, especially if they smell like home. It's a subtle change in perception for the mother and everyone around her if she is dressed like an individual rather than in the uniform of a patient.



## Everyone's toothbrushes.

Some mouthwash just in case. This is considerate for the laboring woman, who may be extra sensitive to odors. (nothing worse than hearing "You're doing beautifully, my Earth Mother Goddess" from someone with trench mouth.) Also, a fresh mouth can help everyone to feel more human after a long night of labor.



## A strand of twinkle lights or LED candles.

Candles are dangerous in a hospital, and even sometimes home birth, because there are tanks of oxygen in case of emergency. But there's nothing more soothing and Oxytocin-promoting than candle-light. This is an easy solution at low cost. Little LED tealights scattered around the room or a long strand of twinkle lights across a window sill will achieve the same dappled-light effect.

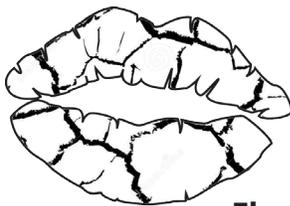


Fig. 1

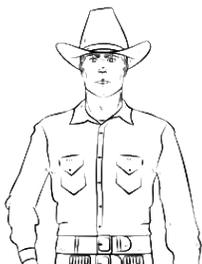
## Your favorite vibrator. (What?! yes.)

The hormones that cause contractions are the same ones that flood our bodies during an orgasm. In private, the mother can stimulate her clitoris to orgasm to boost these hormones. If labor stalls or contractions weaken, it is a common hospital trick to apply nipple stimulation or have the mother use a breast pump. Same idea! Don't have a personal toy? Great excuse to go to the toy shop!

**CHAPSTICK** When labor becomes active, many women cope by exhaling through their mouths. The hard work of pushing also dries lips. I open a fresh tube of chapstick at nearly every labor I attend. It's the little things.



**Button down shirts for partner.** After baby is born, there will be pockets of time that mom will not be holding the baby. Partners can take this opportunity to hold the baby skin to skin, which is more easily accessed through a button down shirt. One father I worked with held his newborn this way in the operating room after a Cesarean Birth. This small thing comforted the entire family.



**Electrolytes.** Some hospitals bring a menu to the mother to see what she would like to eat. Some hospitals limit food intake completely. Either way, the woman may still vomit during labor. Having a quickly digestible sugar for energy can really help keep her going. Hospitals with a strict policy will often allow small sips of clear fluids. I am a big fan of EmergenC packets, electrolyte water or instant broth packets.

