Pregnant? Hereâ??s how much money you may need to prepare from pregnancy to delivery and your babyâ??s first year

Description

Needless to say, being pregnant in Singapore isnâ??t a cheap affair. There are many costs to think about, and the bills can easily add up, leading to stress over a lack of finances if you arenâ??t prepared for it.

What should one expect to spend and save up for when you get pregnant? Here are some costs to think about (numbers are estimations based on my own pregnancy journey this year):

Pre-natal / Pregnancy costs

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Gynae visits ($1,000 â?? $3,000)
Each consultation will easily set you back by $100 â?? $300+ depending on whether youâ??re seeing a public or private gynae, and how popular they are. Some offer the option to take on a package after your fourth month, which helps to save on consultation and ultrasound scan costs, but youâ??ll still have to pay for your own supplements / medications.

Pre-diagnostic tests ($400 â?? $1,500+)
Most expecting mothers in Singapore would have to undergo three tests throughout the duration of their pregnancy:

- Down syndrome test between 12 â?? 14 weeks (OSCAR is the cheapest but also has a higher rate of false positives)
- Fetal assessment test between 20 â?? 22 weeks
- Gestational diabetes test in your fifth month

Depending on which tests you opt for (especially to test for Down Syndrome), these can cost you anywhere from $395 â?? $1500+.

Prenatal classes ($300 â?? $1,000)
If youâ??re going for prenatal classes (whether for exercise or for knowledge), these cost money too! Costs vary depending on the number of sessions and types of classes you go for, but expect anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousands if youâ??re going with a branded or more well-known provider. My husband and I opted for a one-day intensive workshop at Thomson Medical.

Maternity clothes
Letâ??s get real â?? youâ??ll probably have to spend some money on new clothes to fit your growing bump, unless youâ??re lucky enough to have friends who will give theirs to you secondhand (and provided that they fit!). You can read my consolidated budget tips here for maternity wear, but the key tips I would share is to stick with loose clothing for your first and second trimester, and then surviving your second and (the start of your) third trimester on clothes that are 1 â?? 2 sizes bigger. When you have no choice but to buy new clothes towards the last 2 months of your pregnancy, go for maternity-convertible-to-nursing outfits so that you can continue wearing them even after youâ??ve delivered your baby. I got 3 of such sets for work from Dear Collective, and the rest from ASOS Maternity when there were sales.

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Delivery costs

▸ Private Hospital (1 Bedded)

Hospital	Volume [1]	Average Length Of Stay (days) [2]	Bill Size Low ($) [3]	Bill Size Middle ($) [4]	Bill Size High ($) [5]
GEH	65	4.8	13,498	17,220	18,630
MAH	143	4.0	10,677	11,824	14,260
MEH	90	4.3	14,077	15,383	20,448
MNH	99	4.5	13,366	15,750	19,508
TMC	79	3.3	9,418	10,754	12,724

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Hospital package ($2,000 â?? $15,000)
Whether youâ??re going for a natural birth, scheduled Caesarean or end up with an emergency Caesarean, the costs rise in that very same order. If youâ??re unsure how much you ought to expect, you can check out this really useful guide by MOH on the average bill sizes for delivery. Note that the higher rates doesnâ??t mean thatâ??s the highest, because 1 in 4 patients pay *more* than the highest figure stated. In fact, my friend ended up with a $18,000 bill because while his wife initially opted for a natural birth, circumstances warranted an emergency C-section at the end.

Your duration of stay, type of medical consumables and pain relief (laughing gas, spinal block, epidural, etc) will also bring up the costs (in that same order).

Gynae and other professional fees ($2,500 â?? $8,000)
Aside from the hospital fees, the other component in your hospital bill that has the most variation (because it depends on the professionals you pick) would be the professional service fees incurred by your doctor, anaesthetist and childâ??s pediatrician. Your gynae will most likely charge you a fee per visit to the hospital, so if youâ??re in labour for a really long time, there might be multiple visits to pay for. In addition, there will be a gynae fee for carrying out the delivery as well. Private gynaes charge different rates for different procedures so thereâ??s a huge range of costs to expect â?? check with your own gynae directly to get a better and more accurate estimate for you to plan towards.

Part of these costs can also be paid out of your Medisave (or your husbandâ??s):

- Up to $900 for pre-delivery / prenatal expenses (so do remember to pack your receipts in your hospital bag for submission)
- Between $750 â?? $3,950 for surgicial procedures ($750 for normal vaginal delivery, $1,250 for assisted vaginal delivery, and higher for c-section operations)
- Up to $450 per day in hospital

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Insurance costs



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Maternity insurance ($350 â?? $550)

To protect against unexpected pregnancy or delivery complications, you can either save up more on your own, or opt for maternity insurance to offset these costs. There are generally two types of maternity insurance plans available in Singapore â?? the standalone plans and the bundled options. Make sure you pay attention to the conditions covered and the underwriting criteria. For a detailed study across price, coverage and exclusions, you may refer to my 2018 comparison table here for when I was shopping around for my own.

Insurance for yourself and your spouse
With a new dependent, it is crucial that you and your spouse are financially covered so that lest anything happens to either of you, the insurer(s) will provide a payout that can then go towards covering your childâ??s future expenses. Consider hospitalisation, personal accident, term / life with critical illness riders, and income replacement policies for a start. No cost estimates for this section provided because what and how much you choose to be insured for will affect your premiums paid, so itâ??ll be best to seek advice from a financial adviser(s) and get quotes so you can decide what falls within your affordability.

Insurance for your child
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What insurance policies do you need to get for your newborn? In my view, hospitalisation and personal accident plans are absolutely essential, term/life plans are debatable, whereas endowment and ILP can be skipped *provided that* youâ??ll do your own savings and investments. You can read more about each policy and its varying functions here, as well as which ones I recommend as must-haves vs. the good-to-have-if-you-can-afford-it. The premiums will also vary according to the level of coverage that you choose for your child, so there isnâ??t any cost estimates here either.

Confinement costs



Image credits

Confinement lady ($2,800 â?? $3,500)
Who will be helping to look after you and your newborn baby (while also assisting on household chores and cooking) in the first month after youâ??ve delivered? For those who are lucky enough to have your

parents or in-laws help out, then you might be able to save on the costs of a confinement nanny. If not, you can expect to pay upward of $2,800 if you get from a confinement agency like PEM, or $3,000 and above if youâ??re going with a private nanny.

If your baby comes during the Chinese New Year period, prepare to pay almost double of the price! My friend recently paid over $6,000 for his confinement nanny as his baby was born in February.

Confinement food ($800 â?? $1,800)
If youâ??re getting a confinement nanny, she will be able to cook confinement meals for you as well, but youâ??ll have to pay for the cost of groceries and ingredients. Otherwise, you can also cater ready-made meals from caterers like Tian Wei Signature or Thomson Medical for convenience because you probably wonâ??t have time (or the energy) to handle your own meals and ensure sufficient nutrients for recovery when youâ??re so busy feeding and tending to baby in the first month.

Confinement herbs ($800 â?? $1,200)
There are herbs for consumption and herbs for bathing, usually obtained from TCM shops like Hock Hua or Thomson Medical.

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Post-natal / jamu massage ($700 â?? $1,500)
After delivery, youâ??ll most likely need post-natal massage to help â??resetâ?• your uterus so that your tummy will shrink, as well as potentially get a breast massage to help unclog blocked ducts and reduce engorgement. Depending on the number of sessions you opt for (usually 7 â?? 15 sessions) and which masseur you use, costs will vary accordingly. If you go directly with private and individual masseurs, please make sure you ask them about transport costs, binder costs and peak periods pricing, as many of them quote upfront without including all these extras. You donâ??t want any surprises, do you?

P.S. I tried a few prenatal massages and eventually booked with Post Natal Singapore for mine as they offered the best value-for-money, especially if you purchase during a baby fair or roadshow where they give out pretty good discounts and freebies.

Newborn-related expenses



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Cord banking ($5,000 â?? $10,000)
Will you be banking your babyâ??s cord blood, cord lining or the entire cord? Is it even worth banking your babyâ??s cord? Iâ??ve written extensively about the need for cord blood banking, the pros and cons of donating vs. storing privately, as well as compared against the cost of storing among the different providers in Singapore. For the record, I decided to go with Cordlife for mine and have detailed my reasons in this blog post.

Breastmilk feeding expenses ($500 â?? $1,500)
Think breastfeeding is cheap? Not when you need to get breast pumps, milk bottles and teats, nipple balm, breast pads, etc. All these can add up to quite a bit! Expect to spend even more if you end up feeding your baby formula milk.

Baby items ($1,500 â?? $5,000)
Clothes, mittens, socks, swaddles, diapers, a baby cot, a waterproof mattress protector, a changing mat, a diaper bag, carrier, stroller, car seat, etc. I never knew such a tiny human being needed so many things until I conceived my own! Costs here can vary by quite a bit but there are also various ways of saving money, such as shopping through Taobao, getting hand-me-downs or buying secondhand from Carousell. Some mothers are willing to splurge $1,500 on just their baby cot alone (although I know of none personally except those who have been sponsored), so expect anywhere from $500 and up depending on your own preferences!

Vaccination expenses ($1 or up)
Hereâ??s a tip â?? you get the vaccines for free / at a highly subsidised rate if you go to the polyclinics instead of a private paediatrician. This is because all recommended immunisations under the National Childhood Immunisation Programme (NCIP) are free, thanks to MOH and government subsidies!

Paediatrician expenses (varies)
Depending on how healthy your baby is, costs for paediatrician visits can vary quite widely under this aspect as well. If you need repeated visits for fever, colic or other conditions, then youâ??ll have to pay accordingly per visit and treatment.



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So how much should I save?!

That depends on how much you intend to spend, really, but start budgeting across the above categories and work out a rough budget that youâ??ll need to start saving towards so that youâ??ll be well-prepared. To outsource financial risks (hospitalisation, pregnancy complications, etc), look to insurance to cover that gap, unless you prefer to self-insure the entire sum by yourself.

As a rough gauge, my husband and I initially targeted $20,000 before we realised that some of our friends (especially those who ended up with an emergency C-section) spent close to that sum alone on their hospitalisation and delivery fees. Hence, weâ??ve since revised our baby budget to **$30,000** to last us throughout pregnancy and the first 4 months of our babyâ??s birth.

Where to park my childâ??s savings and government grant? The POSB Child Development Account!

To help us save further on our sonâ??s medical, dental and hospital expenses after heâ??s born, weâ??ll be using our **POSB Child Development Account** together with our Passion POSB Debit Card which gives us 3% rebate for such expenses. Iâ??ve reviewed this previously against the other CDA options in Singapore and felt that this was the best account for us to open to get our CDA grant of $3000 and also the governmentâ??s matching of up to $3,000 (since this is our first child). Thereâ??s

also 2% interest p.a. with no minimum balance, which is relatively higher than many bank accounts that offer basic interest of 0.05% onwards.

Birth Order	Cash Gift (Inclusive of $2,000 Baby Bonus Plus)	CDA Benefits		Total Baby Bonus Benefits
		CDA First Step Grant	Dollar-for-Dollar Matching Cap	
1st & 2nd Child	$8,000	$3,000	Up to $3,000	Up to $14,000
3rd & 4th Child	$10,000		Up to $9,000	Up to $22,000
5th Child & higher	$10,000		Up to $15,000	Up to $28,000

You can also see my comparison here.

We decided to go with **POSB Child Development Account** as it has:

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- 3% cash rebate on hospital, medical and dental expenses (the only one to offer this)
- the best variety of merchant offers including baby essentials, Lazada, RedMart and more
- we can also get a free infant flight on Singapore Airlines to travel with baby Nate next year!



Disclaimer: This post was written in collaboration with POSB, whom I approached after independently reviewing their CDA offering (here) and concluding that they were indeed the best in the market for my family and my baby.

Category

1. Family
2. Pregnancy

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