



The package follows the changes of time. Content is decided by a panel of less than ten people. They are from Kela, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the National Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. Every three years Kela asks mothers for their opinions in a web questionnaire. Don't change much, mothers generally answer, but they do have some suggestions like having a slightly different maternity package for baby number two or three, one that would not include items that do not wear out with the first child.

In 2010, a total of 61,161 children were born in Finland. Nevertheless, the maternity package is not a significant expense to Kela. In 2009 the price tag was 11 million euros, that is 0,001% of all the benefits that Kela paid. From a healthcare perspective the package most likely pays for itself as it ensures pre- and postnatal check-ups in maternity clinics.

The Finnish maternity package was a simple and clever invention that has endured over time. It is an idea that could and should be copied without restrictions. And one should not underestimate the psychological value for the mother: "We are thankful for the joy the box brings! It somehow makes the unborn baby a true member of the family during the first months of pregnancy. We always wait for the whole family to be home before we open the box."

\* Quotes are from Kela's questionnaire to mothers who received a maternity package in 2010.

We have read and understood the BMJ Group policy on declaration of interests and we have no relevant interests to declare.

Image 1—The Finnish maternity package includes over 100 items. Photo credit: Kela.

Image 2—The lid of the box works as a family tree ready to be filled with names and photos of baby's closest adults. Photo credit: Kela.

**Jaana Ahlblad** is the news editor at the Finnish Medical Journal. She has two maternity package boxes filled with photographs in the attic.

**Päivi Hietanen** is the medical editor-in-chief at the Finnish Medical Journal. She has three maternity packages from 1954, 1980, and 1983 with baby clothes in the attic.

See also:

- [Margaret McCartney on the petition to get Bounty reps out of NHS maternity wards](#)
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