

Birth Partner Cheat Sheet

How do I support my partner in labor?

While sometimes forgotten, birth partners have a key role to play in the birth process! Here are some tools to help birth partners participate in the birth as much as both partners desire at every stage.



Early Labor Keys:

Distraction: One of the best ways to avoid going to the hospital too soon is to distract a birthing person until they can no longer be distracted. You can suggest movies, play board games, go for a walk, etc. Do your best to help your partner go about their daily routine.

Rest: It's important for both you and your partner to rest as much as possible in early labor! Encourage your partner to take naps, go to bed at a decent hour, and help them avoid "overdoing it" with walking, stairs, and other commonly suggested "labor progress tips".

Nutrition: Help your partner stay hydrated and well fueled for the labor process by encouraging them to drink plenty of water and eat good sized meals during early labor

Remember!

• Birthers and their partners have the right to informed consent! Ask questions and use B.R.A.I.N to help your partner make informed decisions!

Birth Partner's Hospital Bag:

It's important to make sure you have what you need to care for yourself during birth in order to be present and able to best support your partner! Don't forget to pack care items for yourself in the hospital bag!

- Comfy Change of Clothes
- Snacks/Food
- Gum
- Lip Chap
- Toiletries (toothbrush,
- Water Bottle
- Glasses (contacts they may dry out)
- Phone Charger

Emotional Support:

- **Attention Focusing:** This technique is often used to re-center after either moving to the hospital from home or after there have been multiple interruptions to a birthers rhythm and ritual. For example, saying things like "Ok, let's take some nice, deep breaths, and count to 10"
- **Music/White noise. Creating a calm space:** The atmosphere of the birth space is an important factor in helping labor progress smoothly. Dimming the lights, putting on soft music or a white noise machine, and doing your best to limit people coming in and out are good ways to keep the birth space calm and accommodating to the birth process.
- **Reassurance:** Sometimes all a birthing person needs is to hear that everything is ok. If you sense they might be beginning to worry, do your best to reassure them that they are safe and supported.

Active Labor Support Techniques:

Once you arrive at the hospital there are still plenty of ways you can support your partner.

- Help make decisions
- Words of encouragement and affirmation
- Try not to use counterproductive language. Ex: It can't be that bad, you're overreacting, calm down, etc.
- Make them laugh (releases oxytocin) but be mindful of when it's time to stop joking
- Massage, counter pressure, hip squeezes (if that's comforting and wanted. Ask first)
- Help your partner change positions frequently. Even if they have an epidural, changing sides and using a peanut ball can help things along!
- Getting water/juice, cold cloths, ice chips, etc.