

# Birth Partners

## *Supporting your birther*

Birth Partners have a huge role! Birthing people often look to those they love for the most support and that can be a lot of pressure if you've never experienced birth before. Here are some ways you can help your partner navigate labor, make good decisions, and have a positive experience.

### Use B.R.A.I.N.

#### Benefits

What are the benefits of this intervention/suggestion?  
How will it impact me or baby?

#### Risks

What are the risks of this intervention/suggestion?  
How will it impact me or baby?

#### Alternatives

What are the alternatives of this intervention/suggestion?  
Are there other options available?

#### Intuition

What is my gut telling me?  
How do I feel about this?  
I know myself better than anyone.

#### Nothing

I need more time.  
What if we do nothing?  
What if we wait and see?  
Can this be delayed?  
Do I have time to think about this?  
Do I have time to talk with my team about my choices?

### Know what to Expect

Every birth is different, and there are some things that happen that can be scary or surprising if unexpected!

Here are some common things that happen in birth that are **normal**:

- When the birther starts shaking due to hormones, big changes are happening!
- The messier it gets, the closer we are to meeting baby; pee, vomit, poop, blood and amniotic fluid are all very normal.
- Moaning, screaming, or silence are all welcome in labor if the birthing person feels safe and supported.

### Be Intuitive

No one knows the birthing person like you - so try to be intuitive of what they need.

#### Ways to help:

Make a playlist, refill refreshments, set the mood, give massages, give words of affirmation, give loving touch, get intimate, etc.

#### Ways to stay focused:

Take breaks, take naps, take turns for meals, restroom, and physical support with the doula

Being intuitive is easier said than done, I recommend talking with the birthing person prior to birth about things that would be helpful, specific things they would like you to say or not say, do or not do, or jobs to be in charge of.

## Above all, trust the birthing person!

They know themselves, their body, and their baby better than anyone.

# Birth Partners

## *Supporting your birther*

Many partners have never witnessed birth outside of TV and movies, which are often over-dramatized for theatrical effect. However, birthing people often look to their partners for support, encouragement, and love. So let's discuss how partners can be not only included in birth, but also engaged in a meaningful way, because they know the birthing person better than anyone!

**First question - Are you squeamish?** How do you handle bodily fluids and/or medical situations? How do you handle witnessing others in distress? Will it affect your ability to care for your partner? This is a great topic to address ahead of time with your partner and birth team so that we can make sure you're both educated and supported with what happens in the birthing space.

**Next question - How engaged do you want to be during birth?** This may be the first time you've been asked this question but it's so important! Your partner may have dreamt about having a baby for years and envisioned their birth down to the very last detail. Or maybe not, but labor and birth is still a big part of what's to come, and they may have unspoken expectations of how they are hoping you will support them during their experience. So talk about these expectations, wants, and needs as much as you can! While some people want constant love and touch and affirmation, others prefer to labor quietly and without overstimulation. Some want distraction with conversation, visualization, or meditation, while others want to be told what is happening and why, and most importantly - that it's normal, temporary, and safe. Beyond that, you have many opportunities to be part of this experience such as providing and encouraging snacks and beverages (because nutrients help our bodies run this marathon)! You can provide massage and intimacy to stimulate oxytocin which helps bring labor progress and maternal comfort. You can engage in positions that promote fetal descent and rotation. You can be a calm presence or an enthusiastic cheerleader. You can catch the baby, cut the umbilical cord, and be a vocal advocate for what your birthing partner needs, and so much more.

**Last question (well probably not, but a very important one nonetheless) - Do you trust your partner?** Do you trust that they know themselves well enough to listen to their body? To make good decisions? To let them lead the way on this journey? They are the boss of their body and their birth, and the birth team should follow their lead! For this you can be their advocate, encourage their voice and lift them up, and remind them that they are in control.

Now that you know some of the ways you can participate in birth, how do you envision supporting your partner in labor?

---

---

---