



Birth Doula & Lactation Counseling Services

LABOR TIPS FOR DADS

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FOR YOU TO REMEMBER:

Nothing negative she may say or do to you during labor is personal!!! She's just trying to make it through each contraction and the labor process.

Just LOVE her as if you were both alone and being intimate. Kiss her, touch her, massage her, be close to her, and comfort her. It might be helpful to discover what feels good to her before labor begins. Some women want to be left alone and not touched. It all depends on how they deal with pain. And if that's the case, give her some room. Sometimes your presence alone is enough. Understand that what she's going through is HARD WORK. It's called LABOR for a reason. Be proud of the hard work she's doing. Remember she loves you. And by you LOVING her, you will be helping her cope with pain, work through any fears that may come up and helping her to relax and let go. You'll be helping her give you the most precious gift of life. Your baby!

IF LABOR BEGINS AT NIGHT:

*Suggest she drink 2 big glasses of water or a warm cup of chamomile tea and take a warm, relaxing bath. The general rule for a bath is that it's okay to take one as long as her water bag has not broken. Sometimes a nice warm bath can slow the early stage of labor down and she will be able to get some much needed sleep.

*Help her go back to sleep by massaging her or by putting soothing, relaxing music on.

IF LABOR BEGINS DURING THE DAY:

Early labor is a time to distract her.

*Take her to a place that you both love.

*Time her contractions periodically. There are great Apps out there that make timing contractions simple. In case you're not able to get an App, this is how to time a contraction:

1. Start when her contraction starts and stop timing when her contraction stops. That is how long the contraction is.
2. Time the start of her contraction to the start of her next contraction. That's how far apart they are.
3. When is it time to go to the hospital? When the contractions are 5 minutes apart for 60 seconds (1 minute long) and have been consistent for at least 1 hour. It's called the 5-1-1 rule. I usually ask my client to talk to me during a contraction. If she can, I can usually assume she is in the early stages of labor. If she can't talk to me and has to concentrate through her contraction, she's probably further along. That's

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the norm. Of course there's always exceptions to the rules. If a woman in labor says it is time to go to the hospital, believe her.

- *Take her to the movies or watch one at home. Try to stay away from anything that will stress her out or make her adrenaline kick in. Laughter is really good for her - especially in early labor. As she gets further along she may lose her sense of humor but don't worry about it, it'll come back.
- *Take her for a walk in nature.
- *Take her for a nice lunch.
- *Prepare nourishing, easy to digest foods. She should eat as long as possible. She will need those calories to burn. Here's a list of some easy to digest foods:

applesauce, avocado, cereal, frozen yogurt, ginger, grapes, oatmeal, potatoes (baked, boiled, mashed), puddings, whole grain pasta, rice, rice cakes with nut butter on it, yogurt smoothies, smoothies, soups and broths. (If she's diabetic follow your health care provider's instructions on what she should eat. She should eat small meals or snacks especially before she leaves for the hospital.)

- *Alternate between walking and napping throughout the day. Both of you should get as much sleep as possible because you may not get another opportunity to sleep for a long time.
- *Play relaxing music. Massage her scalp, shoulders and back.
- *Remind her to hydrate. She should drink lots of water. She can have some sort of electrolyte drink but remember that water is the most important for her.
- *Wear something that she likes and keep in close, relaxed physical contact with her.
- *Take responsibility for arranging what needs to be done: pet care, childcare, any phone calls that need to be made.
- *Make a nice warm bath (99-100 degrees) or shower for her. Light candles and play relaxing spa-like music for her. If she is in the bath, pour warm water over her back.
- *Make her a cup of caffeine free tea. Chamomile or red raspberry leaves are good ones.
- *Kiss her and love her. Making out and orgasms can really get labor going.

AS LABOR PROGRESSES:

- *Help her relax by encouraging her to allow her body to go "limp and loose" between contractions. Remind her to breathe down to your baby. Brush her hair or stroke her gently. Touch tense areas in her body and tell her to breathe and relax the area that your hand is on.
- *If she begins to panic, synchronize your breathing with hers. Look her in her eyes and tell her to breathe with you. Help her slow her breathing down.
- *Be supportive. Tell her you love her and that she's doing a great job. Believe in her ability to give birth. She needs to hear from you.



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- *Help her to stay active. Changing positions is key to labor.
- *Be calm and patient. Just love her.
- *Help her with any comfort measures she needs. Check out *The Birth Partner* by Penny Simkins. Make sure you have this book with you during labor.
- *Don't ask her any questions during a contraction. Only encourage her. Breathe with her.
- *Make the room dark, warm and safe. Help her get comfortable. You can do the talking to her healthcare providers if necessary.

TRANSITION:

Transition can be a very intense moment for women. Most women who are doing a natural birth go into another head space or altered state all together. Others can become frightened or want to quit. She can begin to shake, shiver, or become hot and cold. Her cervix is going from 8cm - 10cm. transition is much faster than early and active stages of labor. It can last anywhere between a few minutes to a couple of hours.

- *Keep doing what worked.
- *Again if she begins to panic, synchronize your breathing with hers. Look her in her eyes and tell her to breathe with you. Help her slow her breathing down.
- *Be close to her.
- *Continue to trust her and your baby. Both of them are working very hard.

PUSHING:

- *Encourage her to find the right position to push in. Different positions open the hips up and encourage the descent of your baby. Squatting, laying on her side or on all fours for example.
- *Once she is pushing, get your body close to her somehow so she feels your support and reinforcement. If she is laying on her back, gently support her head while she's pushing by putting your hand under her pillow. Not all men want to watch their baby come out of the vagina. But if you are one of those men, let her know when you see the babies head. Help her if she wants to reach down and feel it.
- *Tell her you LOVE her and that you are grateful for all her hard work, especially after the baby is born.
- *She may become hot, so have a fan nearby to cool her in between pushes.
- *If she is pushing, she will push for 6-8 seconds at a time and as directed by your healthcare provider.

REMEMBER TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF TOO! GET PLENTY TO EAT & DRINK AND TRY TO REST.