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A Guide for Birth Partners

West End Naturopathic Doulas

Labour + Birth Prep Checklist

Listed here are the essentials but your partner may ask for other items at the labour.
To reduce the occurrence of unexpected requests, visualize labour and the birth together, generating a list of anticipated preferences (music, snacks, clothing etc.).

Included are suggestions for actions you can take to help you and your partner have a positive and smooth birth experience.

In the Car

Full gas tank
Blanket
Pillow
Flash light
Infant car seat (professionally installed)

For the Mother during Labour

Preferred snacks and beverages
Cardigan or robe
Warm socks and/or slippers
Downloaded labour/birth play list
Toiletries
Personal focal point i.e photo or object

"Remind them how beautiful they are and how much you love them."

For you during Labour

Copy of birth plan
Directions to hospital
Contact list to be notified at time of labour
Fully charged cell phone
Cash and credit cards
Camera
Snacks
Toiletries
Change of clothes

For your Partner during Postpartum

Nursing bra
snacks
Ear plugs/Eye mask
Sanitary napkins
Reading and writing materials
Change of clothes for trip home

For the Baby

Receiving blankets
Diapers
Clothing for trip home (onesie, gown, hat, outside clothing)

As Labour Approaches

Visualize labour and birth together and generate list of preferred music, beverages, snacks, etc.
Prepare above checklist items
Practice labour breathing and relaxation techniques
Ensure you are both well rested (daily napping is recommended)
Remind them how beautiful they are and how much you love them.

At Onset of Labour

Remain calm but enthusiastic
Praise them for their progress at this point
Remind them you are well prepared and that everything will go smoothly
Notify appropriate persons on contact list that labour has commenced
Ask someone on the list to buy the daily newspaper as a keepsake
Encourage frequent fluids and urination
Help them rest and relax

Stage 1: Early Labour

Praise them for their progress at this point
Offer fluids and light foods (e.g fruit juices, yogurt, bananas, toast, popsicles, vegetable soup etc.)
Help them rest and relax
Encourage position changes as needed

Stage 1: Transition

Never leave them alone
Remind them that this is the shortest phase of the process; that they are strong and they can do it!
Find something to focus on during contractions. A breathing pattern, a photo, an object. Help your partner find this distraction, and then bring them back to it whenever they start to think they won't make it. Your partner will be relying on you to keep your concentration levels up.

Stage 2: Pushing/The Birth

Praise them for their progress at this point
Calmly relay instructions- do not order
Assist them into a comfortable position and be prepared to change positions if progress slows
Provide physical support
Remind them to keep their jaw relaxed and mouth open
Breathe with them and blow at crowning
Enjoy the birth of your baby!

Stage 3: Placental Delivery

Praise them for their incredible accomplishment
Assist them into a comfortable position
Provide physical support
Notify contact list

In the Event of Complications

Stay with your partner and/or baby at all times
Remain calm and positive
Ask your caregivers to clearly explain all treatment options
Ensure you understand all treatment options (i.e. ask questions)
Be flexible. Labour strategies that work for some, may not work for your partner. A birth partner's job is to discern what works, and be prepared to drop what doesn't.

Miscellaneous

Be sure to clarify any questions you may have prior to the labour and birth. It is important that you feel as well prepared and confident as possible before this potentially stressful, but very natural and manageable event in your lives.
Avoid strong scents (e.g., colognes and perfumes, deodorant, foods and beverages, etc.). Labouring people are particularly sensitive to odours.
Do not be offended if your offers of assistance are rejected, your participation and effort are appreciated.
Do not be afraid to take breaks, naps, snacks, etc. Just make sure to have someone replace you so they are never alone.