FOR BIRTH PARTNERS

The Partner's Role in Early Labor

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Early labor can last a while, and how you show up during those hours makes a real difference. These are the things that help most, so you can feel prepared rather than unsure of your role.

Stay focused on her

- Put the contraction timer app, your phone, and visitors aside as much as you can
- Your attention is one of the most comforting things you can offer

Use encouraging words

- "You're doing a great job"
- "You are so strong"
- "You can do this"
- "Everything is going well"

Help with comfort techniques

- Double hip squeeze and sacral pressure
- A warm bath, or a warm compress on her lower back
- Massage, holding her, or lying in bed next to her
- Breathing slowly and deeply together

Stay calm

- She can tell when you're anxious or upset
- If you're not feeling calm, take a deep breath or a quick break

Remind her to take care of herself

- Breathe deeply and slowly
- Eat snacks with fiber, carbs, and protein
- Drink plenty of water
- Use the bathroom often

Take care of yourself too

- Eat meals or snacks and drink water so you don't get exhausted or dehydrated
- Take breaks when you can
- She'll need you rested and ready when active labor begins

Good to know

- Keep the fridge stocked with her favorite snacks and drinks.
- Keep talking with each other. Her needs will change as labor progresses, and she may need more emotional support than usual.
- Try not to focus on the time. Avoid saying things like "It's been 8 hours" or "I wonder how long this will take." Time moves differently in labor, and she may not notice the hours passing unless someone points it out.

Keeping me in the loop

Ask me for tips and ideas whenever you need them. During the day, texting or calling both work well. Late at night I'll be resting up for active labor, so send a text for general updates, and call me right away with anything urgent. I can usually reach most homes in the city in under an hour depending on traffic. Please allow an extra 30 minutes if you live outside the city.

Enjoy this time together. Your baby is on their way, and soon you'll get to hold them and see who they are.