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BIRTHING POOLS
DUNEDIN



Cheat sheet for support people

Early Labour

It is important to note that this stage is all about boosting the flow of oxytocin (the hormone that drives the contractions). The best way for you to help do this is to create a low-stress, high-comfort environment. Always make sure you are following your partners lead, but it's a great idea to encourage the following:

- Rest
- Hydration
- Nourishing food – small amounts, little and often
 - Gentle movement
- Connection and Comfort

There are a number of tools that you can encourage your partner to access to help relieve pain and discomfort and these include ; TENS machine, bath, shower, massage, movement

Reminders: 'deep, purposeful breaths', 'soft lips', 'each contraction is bringing you closer to your baby',

Early labour can be very stop/start, and it's not unusual for it to go on for a few days, so it's very important to remind your partner to rest and relax as much as possible during this stage.



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Active Labour

During this active labour stage, contractions usually will be coming every 3-4 minutes and lasting between 60-90 seconds. Movement should be encouraged at this stage – swaying, squatting or gentle walking can be really helpful to keep labour progressing. Some women find firm massage techniques on their arms, back or thighs really helpful – just keep in mind that you might be doing these massages for hours at a time!

Please remember that hydration is so important during labour, and so is going to the toilet regularly. A full bladder can prevent a baby from dropping into the pelvis – you may need to remind her to go to the toilet!

Some women don't want to be touched during labour, but you will need to stay close to her. Offer encouragement and remind her to keep moving her breath down towards her baby and to focus her energy downwards.

She may need you to remind her to not feel self conscious about making noise during labour – there is a muscular connection between the mouth and the cervix, the throat and the birth canal – if she keeps her mouth open and soft, her cervix and pelvic floor will do the same.

'You don't need to DO labour, you just need to BE in it' – Jodi Wilson

Transition

This is when the cervix is nearly fully dilated and the contractions are very close together. It is likely that your partner will display a wide range of emotions during this stage – despair, sadness, confusion, anger and fear – perhaps directed at you. Don't take it personally – look her in the eye and say 'You CAN and you ARE doing it'

Remind her that what she is feeling is good and healthy pain, it means she is bringing her baby closer, remind her to breathe the baby down. REMEMBER - it's not your job to save her from the pain, it's your job to SUPPORT her through it.