

Partner's Homebirth Guide

You do not need to know everything about birth to be a brilliant birth partner. Your biggest job is often much simpler: know what matters to her, protect the space around her and take care of the practical things so she does not have to.

Before labour

■ Know the plan Read the birth preferences together and know where the maternity notes are kept.	■ Know who to call Have the homebirth team's contact details somewhere easy to find and know the instructions they have given you about when to call.
■ Know where things are Towels, pads, bin bags, TENS, pool equipment, food, drinks and the transfer bag should all be easy for you to find.	■ Practise the practical bits If using a pool, know how it is set up, where the hose goes and that the tap adapter fits. Check speakers, TENS and battery lights are ready.

During labour

Follow her lead	She may want touch, reassurance and conversation, or she may want quiet and space. What helps can change throughout labour.
Protect the room	Keep unnecessary interruptions and practical questions away from her where you can. Deal with the door, phones, lights, food and other household distractions.
Offer, don't overwhelm	A drink, a bite of food, a change of position, the TENS or getting into the pool may be useful. Offer simply rather than repeatedly asking lots of questions.
Look after yourself too	Eat, drink and use the loo. Staying fed and hydrated makes it much easier to remain calm and useful over a long labour.

Useful jobs for a birth partner

☐ Keep water and easy food nearby	☐ Help with the pool if you are using one
☐ Keep towels and pads within reach	☐ Keep phones charged and distractions to a minimum
☐ Manage lighting, music and room temperature	☐ Know where the transfer bag, notes and birth preferences are

If plans change

If transfer to hospital is discussed or chosen, your practical preparation becomes really useful. Bring the packed bag, maternity notes, birth preferences, phones and chargers. Listen to what is being discussed, ask questions if she wants you to, and help keep the atmosphere as calm and familiar as possible.