

Partner Support Guide

How to be an amazing support throughout pregnancy, birth, and beyond

Being a supportive partner doesn't mean having all the answers. It means being present, learning alongside, and showing up consistently. Here's how.

During Pregnancy

Ways to Show Support:

- Attend prenatal appointments (or ask for updates after)
- Read one book or resource about pregnancy/birth
- Learn about your partner's birth preferences
- Take on extra household tasks as pregnancy progresses
- Plan date nights before baby arrives
- Be patient with mood changes and physical discomfort
- Attend childbirth education class together

During Labor

Active Support Techniques:

- Offer water/ice chips frequently
- Apply counter-pressure on back during contractions
- Encourage position changes every 30-60 minutes
- Use encouraging words: "You're doing amazing"
- Protect the space (dim lights, minimize interruptions)
- Time contractions when helpful
- Remind them to empty bladder every hour
- Hold hands, make eye contact, breathe together

TIP: Your partner doesn't need you to "fix" anything. Being calm, present, and encouraging is often the most valuable support you can offer.

What to Say (and Not Say)

' Helpful Things to Say:

- "You're so strong"
- "One contraction at a time"
- "I'm right here"
- "What do you need?"
- "I love you"
- "I'm so proud of you"

' Things to Avoid:

- "Calm down" or "Relax"
- "It can't be that bad"
- "When will this be over?"
- "My mom said..."
- Complaints about your discomfort

During Postpartum

Practical Ways to Help:

- Take over diaper changes
- Handle night feedings you can (bottle if applicable)
- Prepare meals and snacks
- Do laundry and housework
- Be the gatekeeper for visitors
- Encourage rest ("I've got this—go sleep")
- Run errands
- Learn to soothe baby your own way

Emotional Support:

- Check in daily: "How are you feeling?"
- Listen without trying to solve
- Validate the difficulty of recovery and feeding
- Watch for signs of postpartum depression
- Express appreciation and admiration
- Take initiative without being asked

Taking Care of Yourself

You can't pour from an empty cup. Partners need support too.

- Eat regular meals
- Get outside for fresh air
- Accept help from family and friends
- Connect with other new parents
- Give yourself grace—this is new for you too
- Talk about your feelings

Partner postpartum depression is real. If you're feeling disconnected, anxious, irritable, or not yourself for more than 2 weeks, talk to someone.

Working with a Doula

A doula doesn't replace you—they enhance your support!

- Doulas suggest techniques when you're out of ideas
- They can give you breaks when needed
- They help you understand what's happening
- You stay the primary support person
- Research shows partners feel MORE involved with a doula present

Questions to Discuss with Your Partner

- What does "support" look like to you during labor?
- How do you want me to handle pain management decisions?
- What are our plans for visitors after birth?
- How will we divide nighttime responsibilities?
- What support do you want me to give vs. seek from others?

