



MINDFUL BIRTHING GUIDE FOR PARTNERS



WELCOME

Hello and welcome to your birth partner guide. Here we will look at all the things you can do to empower and support your birthing partner. This is a guide just for you to help you to feel informed, calm and ready for the journey ahead. You are as important, if not more important, than everyone else in the room (excluding your partner!). It is only right that you feel calm, in control and ready.

This will mean everything to your partner and your baby.

Nicola



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 - 04

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook will help you feel informed, confident and calm in your ability to support your birth partner through labour and birth.

5-7

CHAPTER 1: EARLY LABOUR

This chapter walks through early labour, what to expect and ways in which you can support your partner.

8-11

CHAPTER 2: ACTIVE LABOUR

This chapter focuses on your role in labour and how important you are to Mum & Baby.

12-14

CHAPTER 3: AFTERBIRTH

The end of the journey and how you make the most of the golden hour

16-18

CONCLUSION

Some tips on life post baby, how to look after yourself and how to book your own 1:1 birth prep session



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook provides straight forward, no nonsense advice on how to support your partner during labour and birth. Each section will focus on different aspects of labour, providing information on what is going on for your partner and how to support her to birth your baby.

There are Do's and Dont's but every woman is different. I encourage you to talk to your partner about her wishes and wants and how you can best support her in the way she wants.



CHAPTER 1

PREGNANCY

As a mother of two myself I can only apologise on behalf of your partner for the mood swings, laughter turned crying and death stares that have made an appearance during this 'wonderful' time!! During pregnancy women are navigating a massive shift in identity both internally and externally. You may also be feeling this as you start to think about yourself as a 'Dad'. It is a rollercoaster time but it will come to an end so be kind to her and, to yourself as you balance life and upcoming fatherhood.



CHAPTER 1

PREGNANCY



The three things every woman needs to give birth with ease

are

Silence

(Not being asked questions or being interrupted)

Dark/dim/low lighting

(This increases melatonin & serotonin production making
contractions way easier)

Not being observed

(Nobody likes being observed when they are doing
something difficult, labour is the same)



CHAPTER 1

PREGNANCY

TOP TIPS

- A baby will not arrive into a nest that is not ready. If there are jobs needing done around the house, best to get them done.
- Talk about the birth plan or what your partner would like on the day. You will be her advocate, you need to know what her wishes are so you can ensure this for her & baby.
- On her bad days, thank your partner for growing your baby. A baby takes a lot from us so we can feel very defeated and taken for granted. I promise it will diffuse all the tension and soften her demeanor.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY LABOUR

Despite what you have read, seen or heard babies are not born within minutes of the first contraction. Also only 5% of babies are born on their 'due date' so get that number out of your head. Instead focus on the timeline of 40-42 weeks. This is more accurate and will help reduce stress levels in the house.

A baby cannot be late for something that has not started.

Early labour can take hours to become active especially with first time Mums. Also, waters breaking does not always mean a baby is going to come straight away. A more likely situation will be that her waters will break right before your baby is born and you will already be in the delivery room.

So how does labour unfold? Well there are in fact 3 stages to labour:

1. Early labour
2. Active labour
3. Afterbirth





CHAPTER 2


EARLY LABOUR

WHAT IS IT?

Early labour occurs when your partner will start to feel mild cramps or spasms in her uterus. These will feel so mild that you partner will question if its even labour! But be warned if she is at 40-42 weeks there is a strong possibility she has begun her labour.

WHAT WILL DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

You partner will be able to carry on about her day. You should encourage this and not feel panicked as now you know early labour can take time to become active. You may start to notice yourself observing your partner more and this is totally normal, just dont let her know your doing it! Initial contractions are mild, like period pains and she will most likely be talking through them.



CHAPTER 2

EARLY LABOUR

WHAT DO I DO?

As the day progresses you will notice her going silent and into herself to manage her contractions. This is normal and a good sign. When you notice your partner going quiet for longer periods, start timing it. This will indicate how far she is in labour. When you are timing your partner do not speak to her, watch her! She may say to you 'here's another one', start your timer, phone or watch. You will see her start to breath deeply, move around, bend over and go silent. After 30seconds she will lift her head and continue breathing. When she starts talking to you again, stop your timer. This is one full contraction.


When you note all these down, look at them and see if there is a pattern of 5-1-1. Every 5minutes a contraction happens, it lasts for 1 minute and this has been the pattern for one hour. If you can say this, its time to phone the labour ward and let them know your on the way.



CHAPTER 2

EARLY LABOUR

TOP TIP

- Encourage you partner to eat and drink, little and often throughout the day. She will need it but forget to do it.
 - Suggest walks, watching funny things on TV as this produces the Oxytocin, this hormone encourages labour & makes contractions easier, taking a bath or doing movements on her yoga/pregnancy ball (if she has one).
 - Save the number of the labour ward on your phone before the big day
 - Do trial runs to the hospital in different traffic conditions
 - Find out about hospital parking. Do you need coins, can you download a parking app, does the hospital/ insurance cover the cost, where do I park on the hospital grounds?
 - Take it easy on the journey to the hospital, I understand that you will be eager to get there ASAP but this will not help your partner. Go at appropriate speeds and remain as calm as possible as your partner will be feeding off your energy.
- 



CHAPTER 3

ACTIVE LABOUR

WHAT IS IT?


Game on!


Active labour is when the cervix is fully dilated, and baby is on the way. Your partner will now be in hospital and I have to stress that it is **NORMAL** for labour to **SLOW DOWN/STALL** while your partner adjusts to her new surroundings. It is so important that you remain calm as she will look to you for reassurance in this new environment.

Contractions will have become more intense but your partner will be using her breathing techniques to manage this herself. As contractions become closer together your midwife will be more present, doing observations and making notes.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE

Your partner will be mostly silent as she focuses on her contractions and breathing. You will notice her moving about in-between contractions as she tries to find the most comfortable position.






She may start to make low groaning noises, humming noises or straight up shouting/screaming. Remember just because your partner is shouting it does not mean that there is anything wrong, check in with her and see if she's ok before doing anything else.

WHAT DO I DO?

Stay calm.

Your partner is built to birth your baby, she knows what she is doing even if its her first time. Support her to keep doing what she is doing. Protect her space, healthcare workers mean well but they can be intrusive at times. Act as the barrier/wall between them and your partner. She must not be disturbed and if you have had all the pre birth chats, you will know what your partner wants and when.

It is your job to protect the environment, keeping it quiet, calm and comfortable. This could mean minimising distractions, encouraging snacks, reminding her to drink fluids & keep peeing, or suggesting different labouring positions/movement to help manage contractions.



CHAPTER 3

ACTIVE LABOUR



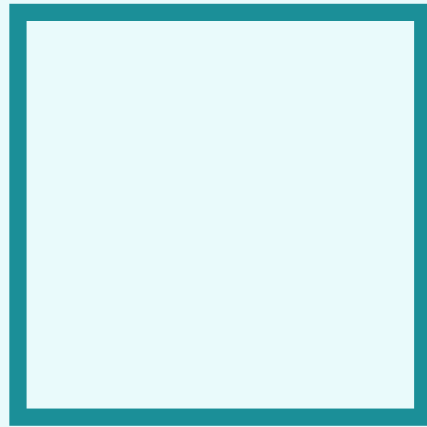
Here's a good exercise for you to practice to help manage any stress you feel on the day:

Breath in for 4 seconds

Hold for 4 seconds

Breath out for 4 seconds

Rest for 4 seconds



This is called the box breath, it helps if you imagine a box & follow the sides as you breath



CHAPTER 3

ACTIVE LABOUR

TOP TIPS!

- Remind your partner of any other pain relief methods she was open to, eg TENS machine, gas & air, pethadine. Again she may not remember in the moment but could be so grateful of you suggesting it.
- "Dont say Dont" say "Remember". When we say the word dont we automatically panic, this creates adrenaline and this hormones stops labour! e.g. avoid saying "don't hold your breath" instead say to her "remember your breathing, in....out..."
- Tell everyone to get out! The more strangers that are around the longer it will take your partner to settle and start labouring again.
- Remind your partner to drink plenty of fluids. The uterus is a muscle and needs to be hydrated for labour.
- Remind your partner to pee! She will forget but it will help bring baby down into the birth canal.
- Tell your partner how amazing she is, literally tell her because she may not feel it herself. If she likes affirmations recite these to her, gently, as she manages her contractions.

CHAPTER 4

AFTERBIRTH

WHAT IS IT?

Baby is here but there is one more thing your partner has to do. Birth the placenta!

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE

Your partner will start to feel contractions again even though baby is out. This is completely normal as her body is getting ready to get rid of the placenta. It is a big organ so dont be surprised by the size of it!

WHAT DO I DO?

Not much to be honest! It is a matter of supporting her once again and reminding her that shes done, baby is here and you are both parents!

TOP TIP

This can be an opportunity for you to do skin-to-skin with baby while your partner does this one final task. Wear a button down shirt or a hospital gown but back to front so that you can have your chest ready for baby. This is a brilliant start for baby as they get your good bacteria & its a wonderful bonding experience for you as a Dad



POST BABY

THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

While becoming a parent is a wonderful thing it is not without its worries. Did you know that the number of men who become depressed in the first year after becoming a dad is double that of the general population. 25% percent of dads experience mild depressive symptoms and around 10% to 12% have a diagnosis of depression.

First time dads are appear to be more vulnerable to postnatal depression. The most vulnerable time is between 3-6months post baby. If your partner develops post natal depression there is a higher likelihood of you developing it too. Having a baby & becoming a Dad is a huge transition so minding your mental health is vital for you and your family.

Email the word 'fatherhood' to info@mindfulbirthing.ie for a list of informative resources



NEED MORE INSIGHT & SUPPORT?

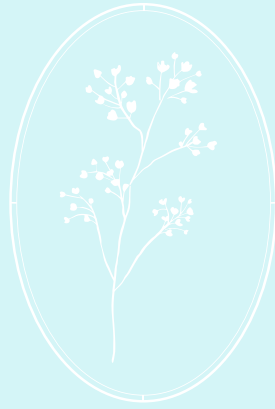
BOOK IN YOUR OWN 1:1 SESSION WITH ME

While this guide has been written to give clear info on your partners labour & birth you may have more questions. Book your own individual 1:1 session with me where you can discuss all aspects of how to support your partner and baby, how to manage post baby and ways in which to mind your own mental health if this is an area of concern.

If your partner is already working with me you and you are unable to attend sessions you can avail of a 15% discount for your own individual session.

Head over to www.mindfulbirthing.ie and click the 'book free consultation' button for more





Do you have
more questions?
Contact me on the
details below

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www.mindfulbirthing.ie

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