

## **Support Person Helpful hints**

- \*Offer words of encouragement-She may get angry; don't take it personally. Remember what she's like when she is not in labor. It's ok if you ask for help from the nurse or midwife.
- \*Offer ice chips- Breathing causes dry mouth and lips. Ice helps; use lip balm. If you don't have any ask for some Vaseline. Limit ice if she is nauseated.
- \*Wipe a sweaty brow- whichever feels better hot or cold wash cloths. It may also feel good on the back of the neck, chest, or belly. Fan face and body.
- \*Touch/gentle massage of lower back, especially with back labor. Lotion may feel good. Caution- some moms do not like touch at all.
- \*Be Calm and confident- don't allow her to feel miserable. Ask questions so you know what is happening.
- \*Bring something like a lollypop to suck on for both her and yourself. Bring some snacks so you don't have to leave as often.
- \*Be a breathing coach- If you don't know breathing patterns; ask the nurse/ midwife. Remind the mom to breathe. It helps to breathe with her.
- \*Remember to pace yourself- Take breaks occasionally, a short nap, or walk, a snack or meal. You need to be rested and well fed to be at your best for her.
- \*Help with position changes- Help her about every hour or so, from side to side or to her back.
- \*Consider a family "go between" who can relay progress to others so that you can stay with the mom for support with less interruptions. Encourage the others to stay at home and not call the hospital.

### **In early labor:**

- ❖ Provide encouraging and words of praise.
- ❖ Make some tea or broth to drink
- ❖ Play cards or watch TV
- ❖ Suggest a shower to help her relax
- ❖ Provide something to focus on during contractions (a photo or object).

- ❖ Suggest a change in position or a short walk
- ❖ Keep extra people to a minimum.
- ❖ Breathe with her during the contractions.
- ❖ If her belly hurts:
  - Remind her to use the restroom
  - Change positions
  - Light massage or touch might help
  - Talk about a relaxing time
  - Play music that might seem relaxing
  - If home- open a window
- ❖ If her back hurts:
  - Change positions
  - Use a warm or cold compress on her back whichever one feels best.
  - Press a tennis ball or your hands on her back providing counter pressure
  - Sit back-to-back and press together
  - Have her stand or lean against the wall
  - Help her get on her hands and knees and rock back and forth.
- ❖ If Legs and arms shake
  - Hold her steady so she feels more in control. Use a soft touch or long, firm strokes on the legs and arms
  - Rub her feet and hands
  - Put a warm blanket on her.

If contractions stop:

Talk about the labor and encourage her by telling her she is strong. Rub her back or take a walk.