

Doula / Support Person Reference Guide

- Be prepared to do nothing or do everything;
- Keep the room quiet and peaceful;
- Speak quietly and ask others to speak quietly;
- Direct people outside of the room to ask questions or to discuss anything;
- Make sure mobile phones are on silent and not vibrating;
- Dim the lights and close the blinds;
- Play calming music softly;
- Reduce the number of people in the room;
- Remove children if they become restless or are distracting;
- Don't ask mum questions or make small talk especially during contractions;
- Always give encouragement using positive affirmations such as "you are doing so well" and "you are strong" and "I'm so proud of you" and "let go of all tension" and "your body is loose and limp";
- Encourage deep, low sounds rather than high pitched screaming;
- Encourage slow, deep breathing – (breathing in through the nose and out through the nose if possible);
- Light touch massage to help release endorphins;
- Counter pressure massage on lower back / sacrum;
- Acupressure points for calming or increasing contractions;
- Use a head massager to stimulate endorphins;
- Run a warm bath or shower with the water jets directed at her lower back;
- Help mum to the toilet regularly to do a wee;
- Apply lip balm to mums' lips so they don't dry out;
- Don't sit there watching her;

- Don't have the TV or radio on if the mum is in her zone and use headphones;
- Give mum head phones to listen to her music or relaxation tracks and then she is less likely to be interrupted by medical staff;
- Avoid clock watching – time has no relevance;
- If mum must be hooked up to the electronic foetal monitor (EFM) make sure the birth partner asks for the wireless monitor, so she can move around more freely and get into the bath or shower;
- If she is hooked up to the monitor, make sure she has her back to it, so she is not constantly checking the screen and the numbers;
- Ask for the sound on the monitor to be turned OFF;
- When in doubt, ask questions;
- Don't give choices of food – just put it to her lips to eat;
- Offer drinks through a straw;
- Put socks on mums' feet if they are cold;
- Get heat packs or work the TENS machine;
- Tie her hair back or keep it out of her face;
- Suggest different labour and birth positions for her comfort;
- Remind her of her breathing techniques;
- Say her positive affirmations to her;
- Put cool flannels on her neck, shoulders, back and face if she is hot;
- Take the opportunity to sleep if she is asleep;
- Be ready to support and encourage mum through any special circumstances;
- Don't take offense if mum pushes you away or tells you to go away;
- Put a blanket or sheet over her if she is feeling exposed or watched;
- Keep referring to the FIVE SENSES OF BIRTH.