



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Support in labour

Issued by the Maternity Department

building a caring future

HOSPITAL | COMMUNITY | HOME

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

This leaflet is to help you to decide who should come into the unit with you when you are in labour.

The person you choose should also read this so that they can think about how they may support you during this time.

## Who should be there?

Although four out of five fathers will want to be with their partner and attend the birth, this might not be right for everyone. It is important for you to be able to talk about your individual needs and agree on what is best. You need the best support available, you should have someone with you who can support and encourage you.

## What should your birth partner do?

Your birth partner is not just there to witness the birth. Do not underestimate the difference that their support can make. Giving support means helping, praising, encouraging, reassuring, comforting and being totally selfless and putting your needs as the mother first. Show your chosen birth partner the following information which will help them understand the importance of their role:

## Before labour

### What is my role as a birth partner?

- Attend parentcraft/visit maternity unit. Your community midwife can advise on this.
- Make sure bags are packed. Pack something for yourself to read and to eat and drink. Some labours can last 24 hours
- Labour wards are warm places; make sure you are wearing comfortable clothes
- Make sure transport is organized
- Make sure you know where to go and have coins for car parking
- Be aware of the signs of labour, and read your partner's birth plan

- Help pass the time during the early stage, offer light meals and encourage your partner to be mobile as much as possible. Both you and your partner should try and sleep
- If your partner has rung the hospital and been advised to remain at home until labour establishes do not panic. Remaining at home can reduce the overall duration of labour and the amount of painkillers that are required
- Help your partner relax if she has been advised to stay at home. You can do this by offering lots of encouragement:
  - Encourage her to stay upright and active
  - If she is using a birthing ball encourage her to use it
  - Massage her lower back
  - Run a warm bath
  - Encourage her to drink and to empty her bladder frequently: a full bladder can cause a lot more pain during a contraction
  - Offer simple painkillers for example paracetamol if advised by your midwife.

## Keep calm

- Many labouring women go into their own world. They may not want you chatting or to speak to lots of people. They may want peace, dimmed lights and quiet music.
- Provide as much support as possible. Birth partners should not leave delivery suite unless it is absolutely necessary.
- You can make sure your partner knows what is going on and can ask the midwife if there is anything you do not understand. Continue the support you provided before coming into hospital. Comfort her as the labour progresses and the contractions get stronger. Hold her hand, wipe her face, give sips of water, massage her back help her move about or change position or anything else that helps

- Make sure her wishes are understood
- Be supportive of her decisions, such as the pain relief she chooses
- Be positive: tell her how well she is doing. Often women require a lot of reassurance, boost her confidence tell her she's doing a great job
- Don't moan or complain if you are bored or tired, do not make her worry about you
- Don't take any aggression targeted at you personally
- Enjoy it: labour is hard work for all, but the occasion is one you'll never forget.

## Contact Numbers

### **The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital**

Northumbria Way

Cramlington

NE23 6NZ

**Pregnancy assessment unit:** 0191 607 2815

**Birth centre:** 0191 607 2318

**Ward 16:** 0191 607 2016

### **Berwick Midwifery Led Unit**

High Green

Berwick-upon-Tweed

TD15 1LT

01289 356 622

### **Hexham Midwifery Led Unit**

Corbridge Road

Hexham

NE46 1QJ

01434 655 352

### **Hillcrest Midwifery Led Unit**

Infirmery Drive

Alnwick

NE66 2NS

01665 626 732





## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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