

# LABOR SUPPORT CHEAT SHEET

- Remember: Focused Awareness! Look at her during contractions, give her your undivided attention.
- Support people should take care to attend to their own needs. Stay well hydrated and nourished.

Timing contractions: beginning to beginning (frequency) and beginning to end (duration)

📖 Change position or move every 30 minutes.

- \* Side-lying pelvic floor release? Remember to do BOTH sides.
- \* Inversion?

📖 Remind her to empty her bladder once an hour.

📖 Don't ask, offer.

📖 Relaxed throat and jaw, remember the connection.

📖 Low sounds.

📖 Soft hands and feet.

☺ Remember that it is your job to be sure Mom hears something positive after a vaginal exam: Has the baby come down? Has the baby turned any? Is the cervix softer, more stretchy or more effaced? Has the cervix moved further forward?

## Comfort measures

### ❖ Eye contact

- If she is laboring with her eyes closed and doing well, leave her be.
- If she is frightened or panicked, say "Look at me", then use your voice, eyes and breath to help her.

### ❖ Talking

- Remind her to take one contraction at a time.
- Try visualizations of opening (flowers, cervix, water rippling from a pebble dropped).
- Remind her that she is progressing and that the baby is coming.
- Help her to welcome strong contractions.
- Use her affirmations.

### ❖ Heat/Cold

- Change positions or remove/add cold and hot ONLY between contractions.
- Apply to the abdomen over the cervix, lower back, thighs.
- Cool washcloth on her forehead, especially during pushing. Use a bowl of cool water (use ice or frozen gel things for ice chests) to freshen the cloth.
- Frozen peas in a zip-lock bag conform to the body part to which they are applied and work nicely as a cold pack.
- Hot water bottle
- Rice socks
- Crock pot for warming washcloths

### ❖ Water

- Use tub only in later labor or it may slow labor.
- Use tub only if membranes are not ruptured or with your caregiver's approval. Clean the tub in the hospital yourself before using it.
- Use clay to stop-up overflow for a deeper bath
- For relief that may not slow labor, try the shower.
  - She can sit on a birth ball or stand.
  - Use wet towel on back or front.
  - Shower massages with a long hose are a wonderful tool.
- Put on your swimsuit and get in the water with her.

- ❖ Acupressure points
  - Combs in hands
  - Only give her 2 fingers to squeeze
- ❖ Massage/Touch
  - Shoulders, hands, feet, lower back, thighs, buttocks, head
  - Stroke downward. This will help to draw her focus downward.
  - Use calming strokes, slow and steady in the direction the hair grows. Respect her rhythm.
  - Remember to kiss!

#### For back labor

- ❖ Double hip squeeze (hand on each hip bone, squeeze straight in). Try the rebozo!
- ❖ In and Up: (Find top of hip bones; V to cleft of buttocks; Place hands below V; inward/upward pressure)
- ❖ Positioning
  - Hands and knees (or hands and ball, anything that makes her back horizontal)
  - Pelvic rocking
  - Lunge
  - Lunges on one knee (propose)
  - Slow dancing
  - Stair climbing (sideways)
  - Knee press (Mom sits on chair; support lower back (use swim noodle); support person pushes straight in on her knees)
- ❖ Counter-pressure (lower back, but also ischial tuberosities (sit bones) and glutes)
  - Tennis balls
  - Hand (fist, palm, heel of hand)
  - Swim noodle
  - Cold drink

#### If labor seems stuck

- ❖ Change positions
- ❖ Walk
- ❖ Nipple stimulation
- ❖ Warm shower
- ❖ More fluids? IV?
- ❖ A teaspoon of honey for energy
- ❖ Rebozo
- ❖ Help her let everything go, her body and her anxiety.

#### Things to remember at crowning

- ❖ Remind her that the burning sensation is normal.
- ❖ Remember warm compresses and perineal massage.
- ❖ Tell mom when YOU see the baby's head.
- ❖ Does she want to look with a mirror?
- ❖ Encourage Mom to touch baby's head just before it emerges. It is a wonderful encouragement.
- ❖ Encourage Mom to touch where it burns.