BIRTH PARTNER CHECKLIST

What to do, stage by stage

For the partner or support person. One job at a time. Print it, fold it, and read the next stage while the last one is still going.

TandemBirth
tandembirth.com/birth-partner-checklist

Before 36 weeks

Get it done early

- [ ] Read their birth plan with them. Ask what each line means to them and what they want you to do about it.
- [ ] Fill in your own one-pager: what helps, what to avoid, your signals, who decides what.
- [ ] Car seat installed and checked. Route, parking and the after-hours entrance known.
- [ ] Bags packed, including yours. Three printed copies of the plan, insurance card, ID.
- [ ] Phone numbers saved: care team, backup support person, whoever has the other kids or the pets.
- [ ] Ask the care team when they want to be called, in their words. Write it on the plan.
- [ ] Practice two comfort measures with them: counter-pressure, hip squeeze, slow breathing, a shower routine.
- [ ] Agree on how decisions get made if the plan changes, and on a word that means "give us a minute".

Early labor

Usually at home

- [ ] Note the time contractions start and how far apart they are. Do not time every one yet.
- [ ] Make sure they eat and drink something, and that you do too.
- [ ] Rest if it is night. Distract if it is day: a walk, a film, a bath if the care team said it is fine.
- [ ] Do not rush to leave. Follow the care team's instructions for when to call and when to come in.
- [ ] Set up the room at home the way they want it, if they are staying a while: lights, music, quiet.
- [ ] Quietly handle the logistics: pets, kids, work messages, so they never have to.

Call and go

When they told you to

- [ ] Call the number on the plan. Say the name, the due date, how far apart contractions are, how long they last, and anything else the care team asked to know.
- [ ] Bags, phone, charger, this page, the plan, the snacks. Pillow from the bed.
- [ ] Drive calmly. Stop for a contraction if they ask. Park where you planned.
- [ ] At check-in, hand over a copy of the plan and introduce yourself by your role.

Active labor

Where the work is

- [ ] One job at a time. Pressure, water, a cloth, a hand. Ask "this?" rather than "what do you need?"
- [ ] Breathe with them through contractions, slower than feels natural. Keep your voice low.
- [ ] Remind them to use the bathroom about every hour, and to change position now and then.
- [ ] Guard the room: lights, sound, door, who comes in. Ask staff to introduce themselves.
- [ ] When something is proposed, ask the questions from the plan: what, why, what if we wait, how long do we have.
- [ ] Say their preferences out loud when they cannot. Once, kindly, to the person who can act on it.
- [ ] Phone face down. Eat something. Sit when you can. Tag out to the backup person for ten minutes if you need to.

Transition

The intense stretch near the end

- [ ] Stay close. Short words only: "you're doing it", "one at a time", "I'm here".
- [ ] No questions that need a decision. No jokes. Nothing to take personally.
- [ ] Cold cloth, sips of water, hair back, steady pressure where it helped before.
- [ ] If they say they cannot do it, that is often the sign they are nearly done. Tell the care team what you are seeing.

Pushing and birth

- [ ] Help with positions, a leg, a hand to pull against, whatever the care team and they want.
- [ ] Mirror or no mirror, announcing the sex, cutting the cord: do what the plan says, and check in if the moment feels different.
- [ ] Camera ready only if that was the plan. Otherwise, be in the room, not behind a phone.
- [ ] Say what you see when they ask, and nothing alarming when they do not.

If a cesarean happens

- [ ] Ask to be with them, and ask whether skin to skin in the operating room is possible.
- [ ] Sit by their head. Talk to them. Narrate what is happening if they want that.
- [ ] If the baby goes anywhere, go with the baby, and tell them you are going before you go.
- [ ] Keep the first photos and the first details for them: time, weight, who was there, what was said.

The first hours

- [ ] Skin to skin, quiet, feeding help if that is the plan. Hold off the call list for a bit if they want.
- [ ] Make the calls you agreed on, in the order you agreed on. Send the one photo they approved.
- [ ] Write down what happened, in order, while you remember: times, words, who did what. You will not remember later.
- [ ] Eat. Sleep in shifts. Ask the staff what they need from you before you lie down.

The first week

- [ ] Keep the "what to watch for" list from the care team on the fridge, for them and for the baby, with the number to call.
- [ ] Own the meals, the visitors, the other kids, the medication schedule and the appointments.
- [ ] Protect their sleep. Protect yours. Accept every offer of help with a specific job attached.
- [ ] Tell them, every day, one thing they did during the birth that you will not forget. Then tell your own version of the story.

Not medical advice. Follow your own care team's instructions on when to call and what to watch for. The free two-person planner at **tandembirth.com/planner** turns their answers and yours into a labor-room quick card, a game plan and a call-and-go card with your own numbers on it. No account; answers stay on your phone.