Tips for the Support Person

The support person has a very important role. As each labour and birth are different. It is important for you to be prepared.

- Bring snacks and something to drink
- Rest when possible
- It is okay to ask questions and ask for help

Things you can do to help:
- Offer ice chips, food and water as appropriate
- Time contractions
- Listen to their needs
- Try touch and massage; adjusting your touch to meet their comfort needs
- Note any tense body parts; encourage relaxation and breathing to reduce tension
- Make eye contact to help gain focus
- At times, you may need to move in closer to help
- Use calm and encouraging words such as “breathe with me” and do the breathing at the same time
- Remind them to take a deep breath at the end of each contraction
- Remind them that making sounds with contractions should be low and deep
- Help change positions

Contractions change as the birth gets closer. If one of the tips from the list stops working, try a new one. You may need to try different tips as the labour changes and the birth gets closer.

Timing contractions
- Some people choose to use paper while others use an app. Here is a sample of how to time contractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contraction Begins (enter time)</th>
<th>Contraction Ends (enter time)</th>
<th>Duration (how long the contraction lasts)</th>
<th>Frequency (time from the start of one contraction to the start of the next contraction)</th>
<th>How Strong was the contraction? (Pick one – mild, moderate, strong, very strong)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. 8:15:10 am</td>
<td>e.g. 8:15:40 am</td>
<td>30 seconds long</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Mild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. 8:25:00 am</td>
<td>e.g. 8:25:45 am</td>
<td>45 seconds long</td>
<td>About 10 minutes apart</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>