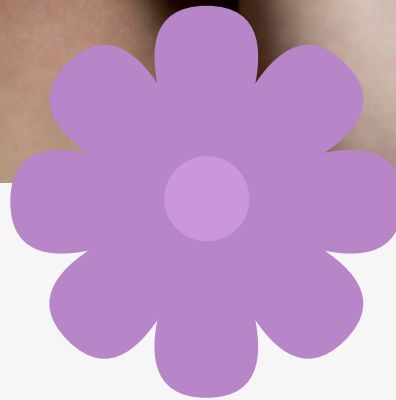


FAMILY TREES BIRTH PROGRAMS

LABOR ALONG

a guided birth companion manual



*This labor companion guide has been lovingly
created for families during COVID-19, 2020*

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For additional education & virtual support, please visit us at
www.FamilyTreesBirthPrograms.com

Internationally accredited childbirth experts

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ABOUT THIS COMPANION GUIDE

While every person, every baby, and every labor are unique, this guide is meant to follow along with your labor journey as it unfolds for you.

For best results, practice with this guide prior to labor. Make note of positions you like. Repeat those as you wish.

This guide is not meant to replace the advice of your healthcare provider.

For more education, please refer to our online childbirth classes at www.familytreesbirthprograms.com

STAGES OF LABOR

Stage One


- Early Labor (0-6 cm) - easiest, longest, and slowest stage (spend this time at home if possible)
- Active Labor (6 - 10 cm) - physically & emotionally demanding, shorter stage (time to transition to the hospital)
- Transition (just before pushing) - most intense, but usually shortest time

Stage Two

- Pushing
- Birth of Baby

Stage Three

- Birth of Placenta
- Immediate Newborn Care



Family TreesBirth
Programs offers
evidence-based,
virtual childbirth
classes

LABOR ALONG

a guided birth



HEALTHY OUTCOMES


The following evidence-based birth practices are recommended by major health organizations such as Lamaze, World Health Organization & ACOG.

Research has shown these Healthy Birth Practices lead to the best outcomes for both moms and babies.

During COVID-19 it is even more important that we have healthy outcomes for moms and babies so that our healthiest population may limit the amount of time spent in the hospital setting.

SIX HEALTHY BIRTH PRACTICES

1. **Let Labor Begin On Its Own**
2. **Have Freedom Of Movement During Labor**
3. **Have Continuous Support**
 - a. **Physical presence may not be possible during COVID-19 - consider virtual support or guided meditation**
4. **Avoid Interventions That Are Not Medically Necessary**
 - a. **This includes epidural**
5. **Have Upright & Spontaneous Pushing**
6. **Keep Mom & Baby Together**



Discuss with your
healthcare provider
the possibility of
returning home ASAP
after birth

EARLY LABOR

Labor along

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL

Physical

- Early on - contractions are very manageable
- You are able to resume normal activity in between contractions
- Contraction intensity will grow over time allowing you to adapt

Emotional

- Excited, anxious, difficult to rest

LABOR BEGINS

Although you may be overwhelmed with emotions as labor begins (excited or anxious), it is **VERY important that you use this time to rest, eat well, and stay hydrated.**

It is normal for labor to last a full day and you will need food, fluid, and rest to be able to keep up with it.

You will appreciate this rest and nourishment in a few hours when contractions pick up and after baby has arrived.

EARLY LABOR

Labor along

IF LABOR BEGINS AT NIGHT

It's likely your labor will begin at night. **As difficult as it might be, use the nighttime to sleep.** Try to rest in bed.

If you are unable to sleep, use this time to rest in a dark, quiet space.

Close your eyes, breathe slow and deep.

Use guided meditation if you need help

- Find on YouTube and on a variety of apps

Remember, if you do not sleep now, it will be more difficult to rest later when contractions will require your full attention. You can never get this time back.

IF LABOR BEGINS DURING THE DAY

If you are not well-rested, make sure to rest/nap **first and foremost.** Being well-rested is a tremendous help.

If you are well-rested, spend your early labor in a peaceful, relaxing environment. Go about your day as usual. Nap at some point.

Time a few contractions as you notice a change in frequency or intensity, but avoid spending the entire early labor timing contractions.

Consider having a labor project to keep you busy and distracted.



IDEAS FOR A LABOR PROJECT

- Cook or bake
- Paint your nails (mani-pedi)
- Binge watch shows
- Clean house, do laundry
- Craft
- Puzzle, board games, cards
- Take a walk
- Knit/crochet
- Garden
- Create a spa at home
- Shower, bathe

STAY NOURISHED

Your uterus is a muscle that has a very big job to do. **It needs calories to do this job.** Eat as if you are recovering from the flu.

Food Suggestions For Early Labor

- Eat mild, healthy food
- Fruits, veggies, salad
- Soup, broth
- Oatmeal, toast
- Whatever sounds good to you

Foods To Avoid

- Spicy
- Greasy
- Heavy



STAY HYDRATED

Staying hydrated is important. Dehydration will cause ineffective contractions, as well as raise your baby's heart rate.

Water is excellent, but also include something with calories such as juice, sports drinks, or coconut water. Your uterus will thank you.

Sip on whatever sounds good to you. Take a big drink after each contraction to help you remember and develop a routine (routines are very important to laboring people).





MOVEMENT

Early labor is an excellent time to have freedom of movement. Moving helps your baby move into the pelvis with the help of gravity.

Movement is a comfort technique that will come in handy.

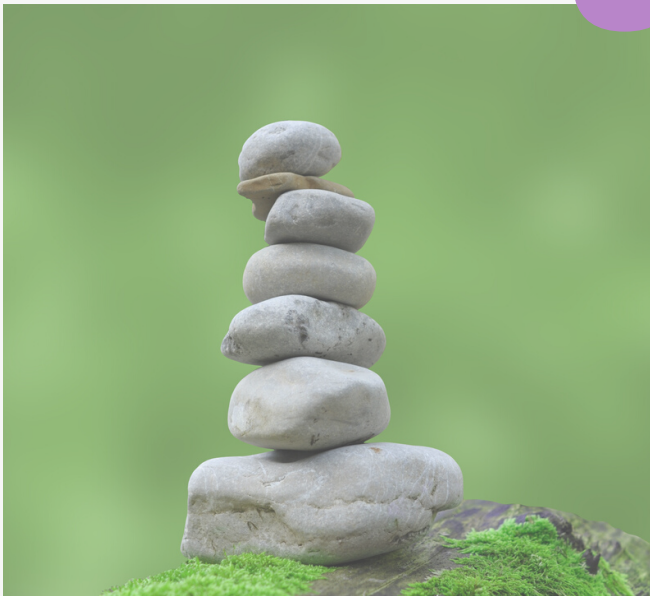
RHYTHM & REPETITION

People in labor will establish a routine. Swaying, breathing, moving, etc during a contraction.

This is a coping technique. Keep it up.



These are the biological needs of birth



PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT

Labor in a peaceful environment. Limit loud noises, lots of background movement, and limit the number of visitors. Avoid texting and social media.

People in your labor space should be providing support - they are not spectators. This hinders progress.

Consider music, nature sounds, or anything that you feel is calming.

Take a childbirth class to learn more about labor & comfort measures
www.FamilyTreesBirthPrograms.com

ACTIVE LABOR

Labor along

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL

Physical

- Contractions require your focus
- May make low moaning or humming sounds during contraction (**normal!**)
- The hard work begins

Emotional

- Contractions may take over emotions
- You are making great progress!



HOW LONG CAN I STAY HOME?

This depends on a few things, particularly your health history and your provider's recommendation.

If you and baby are healthy, a general guideline for laboring at home:

First time labor: 4-1-1

- Contractions are **4 minutes apart**
- Lasting **1 minute**
- And have been that way for at least **1 hour**

2nd, 3rd, + labor: 5-1-1

- Contractions are **5 minutes apart**
- Lasting **1 minute**
- And have been that way for at least **1 hour**

Contact your health care provider if your water breaks for specific instructions.

If you are GBS+ it is recommended you arrive at the hospital in time for two doses of antibiotics, administered four hours apart.

Ideally, you want to do most of your laboring at home (especially important during COVID-19) and arrive at the hospital when you are at least 6 cm dilated.

PUSHING

Labor along

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL

Physical

- Urge to have a bowel movement (this is baby's head, not necessarily stool)
- At first, extreme exhaustion (your body forcing itself to rest)
- Then, overwhelming surge of energy and inability to control urge to push

Emotional

- Uncertainty of what to do (it doesn't matter if your thinking brain knows what to do - your body will do it without instruction).



SECRETS TO PUSHING

- Your body will know how to push your baby out no matter if your thinking brain knows what to do. Just like a sneeze.
- Resist initial urge to push - this allows baby to come down lower on their own.
- Blow away the urge to push (like blowing bubbles with loose lips)
- When urge to push is uncontrollable, allow yourself to follow your body's urge to push.
- Your body will take control. Don't worry about your thinking brain.
- Only push when you have the overwhelming urge.
- Do not allow others to "count" or tell you when to push. This is called "directed pushing" and this is not an evidence-based practice (although this is what we see in TV shows and movies).

Take a childbirth class to learn more about labor & comfort measures

www.FamilyTreesBirthPrograms.com

THIRD STAGE

Labor along

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL

Physical

- Instant relief
- Slight cramping as placenta is birthed
- Placenta is easily birthed
- May shake uncontrollably due to hormones

Emotional

- Possibly elated, exhausted, overwhelmed



WHAT TO EXPECT

- Baby will be placed directly on your skin
- Take in their wonder. Notice how your baby recognizes you.
- Your body will perfectly provide for your baby:
 - The perfect temperature
 - The option to feed
 - The ability to regulate their heart rate and breathing
 - A better glucose level
- You may shake (this is normal)
- A nurse will massage your uterus to prevent postpartum hemorrhage. This is not comfortable. Breathe deeply and slowly. Focus on your baby.
- If you need any repairs to your perineum, your provider will numb the area first.
- Consider asking to see your baby's placenta. You will be amazed at what your body was capable of creating.

As tempting as it might be, avoid using your cell phone at this time. This "Golden Hour" is special to you and your baby. You will never get it back. Enjoy bonding with your baby and ask if your nurse can notify your family on your behalf while you complete this very important part of the birth process. Your baby needs you.

POSTPARTUM

Labor along

PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL

Physical

- Possibly shaking due to hormones
- Possible cramping as uterus continues to contract

Emotional

- Elated, exhausted, overwhelmed, joyous
- Flood of emotions



WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Your baby will begin searching for a nipple**
 - Look for signs of rooting (turning head in search of nearby nipple)
 - Smacking, licking lips
 - Sucking hand
 - Opening mouth
 - Ask your nurse if you need assistance with latching baby onto nipple
- **Even if you do not plan to breastfeed long-term, this initial latch will provide your baby with significant antibodies and enhance their immunity system and gut.**
- **Your baby will wiggle and crawl (this helps massage the uterus and prevent postpartum hemorrhage)**
- **Your provider will make any necessary repairs**
- **Your nurses will help clean up from birth**
- **Your baby will remain on your skin - the safest place for baby**
- **You and your baby will not be separated for at least one to two hours.**

LABOR COMPANION MANUAL

Labor along - 14+ hours of labor support tips

1. SIDE LYING REST

20 minutes

- Lay on your LEFT side
- Turn towards the surface of your bed.
- Pillows or blankets around you for support.
- Breathe slowly, relax all muscles
- Melt into bed.

Reminder to drink/snack



2. HANDS & KNEES IN BED

20 minutes

- Knees apart
- Chest lowered towards bed
- Pillows for support

3. SIDE LYING REST

20 minutes

- Lay on your RIGHT side
- Turning towards the surface of your bed
- Pillows or blankets for support.
- Breathe slowly, relax all muscles
- Melt into bed

Reminder to empty bladder



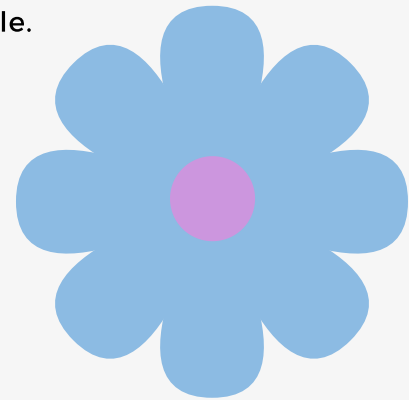


4. SIDE LYING LEG DROP

20 minutes

- Lay on LEFT side
- Lay close to the edge of the bed
- Drop your TOP leg over the side of the bed

Relax deeper on every exhale.



5. HANDS & KNEES IN BED

20 minutes

- Knees apart, chest lowered
- Breathe slowly
- Relax muscles on your exhale

Reminder to drink/snack



6. SIDE LYING LEG DROP

20 minutes

- Lay on RIGHT side
- Lay close to the edge of the bed
- Drop your TOP leg over the side of the bed.
- Relax deeper with every exhale.

Reminder to empty bladder

Repeat any of these positions that feel good to you



7. LET'S MOVE

10 minutes or 3 contractions

- Raise LEFT foot onto a stool

10 minutes or 3 contractions

- Raise RIGHT foot onto a stool

Reminder to drink/snack



8. SLOWLY CLIMB STEPS

10 minutes or 3 contractions

- Hold onto handrail
- SLOWLY climb up and down steps.
- Skip a step if you're able

10 minutes or 3 contractions

- Hold onto handrail
- SLOWLY climb up and down stairs sideways.

Reminder to empty bladder



9. WALK THE CURB

If you're able to go outside -

10 minutes

- Walk along the curb stepping up onto the curb with your LEFT foot.

10 minutes

- Walk along the curb stepping up onto the curb with your RIGHT foot.

Reminder to drink/snack

Keep moving during contractions if you're able



10. HANDS & KNEES WITH BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- On hands & knees
- Lean over birth ball.
- Sway if it feels good

Reminder to empty bladder

11. LEANING ON BIRTH BALL



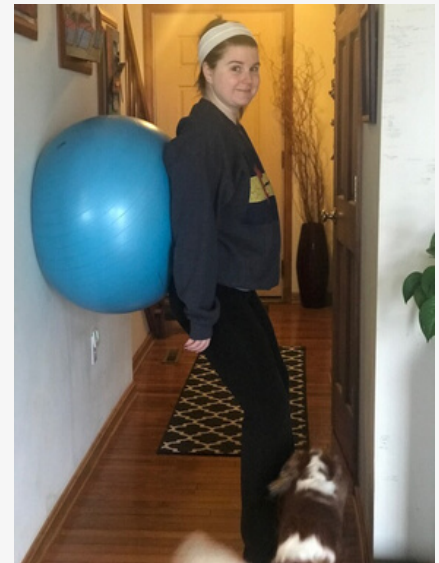
10 minutes

- Lean forward

10 minutes

- Supported squat

Reminder to drink/snack



12. RESTING WITH BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Lean forward
- Sway during contractions

Reminder to empty bladder



Repeat if these feel good. This is a good way to take a nap.



13. SIT & CIRCLES ON BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Sit upright with back straight.
- Hip circle with pelvis
- Equal amounts of clockwise & counterclockwise

Reminder to drink/snack



14. STAND & LEAN

20 minutes

Place birth ball on bed
Lean over
Breathe slowly

Reminder to empty bladder



15. SIDE LYING WITH BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Lay on LEFT side
- Raise RIGHT leg over birth ball

20 minutes

- Lay on RIGHT side
- Raise LEFT leg over birth ball

Reminder to drink/snack



16. BELLY LIFT

20 minutes

- While swaying, lift up on belly during contractions.

Reminder to drink/snack



The toilet is a familiar position when you feel pressure in your bottom



17. TOILET SQUAT

20 minutes

- With knees apart, sit on toilet.
- Close eyes & rest

Reminder to empty bladder

Repeat these positions if they feel good



18. STAND & SQUAT

20 minutes

- Squat with each contraction

Where are your contractions? Is it time to move to your place of birth?

4-1-1?

5-1-1?





19. SWAY OR DANCE

20 minutes

- Dance or sway to music
- Do what feels good

Reminder to drink/snack

Belly dancing is a
dance created BY
women FOR
women in labor

20. REST WITH BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Sit on birth ball
- Lean on bed
- Breathe slowly

Reminder to empty bladder



21. STEP STOOL

10 minutes

Stand near wall
Raise RIGHT foot onto stool

10 minutes

Stand near wall
Raise LEFT foot onto stool

Reminder to drink/snack



22. SIDE LYING REST

20 minutes

- Lay on your LEFT side
- Turn towards the surface of bed
- Use pillows or blankets for support
- Breathe slowly
- Relax all muscles, melt into bed.

Reminder to drink/snack

These are good options for taking a nap. Rest if you are sleepy.



23. HANDS & KNEES IN BED

20 minutes

- Knees apart
- Chest lowered towards bed
- Use pillows for support
- Breathe slowly
- Relax all muscles on exhale

24. SIDE LYING REST

20 minutes

- Lay on your RIGHT side
- Turn towards the surface of bed
- Use pillows or blankets for support
- Breathe slowly
- Relax all muscles, melt into bed

Reminder to empty bladder



Where are your contractions? Is it time to move to your place of birth? 5-1-1



25. SIDE LYING LEG DROP

20 minutes

- Lay on LEFT side
- Lay close to the edge of the bed
- Drop your TOP leg over the side of the bed.
- Relax deeper on every exhale.

26. HANDS & KNEES

20 minutes

- Knees apart
- Chest lowered towards bed
- Use pillows for support
- Breathe slowly
- Relax muscles on your exhale

Reminder to drink/snack



27. SIDE LYING LEG DROP

20 minutes

- Lay on RIGHT side
- Lay close to edge of the bed
- Drop your TOP leg over the side of the bed
- Relax deeper with every exhale

Reminder to empty bladder

The shower or a bath is an excellent choice for comfort as labor progresses

Where are your contractions? 4-1-1? 5-1-1?



28. HANDS & KNEES WITH BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Lean over birth ball
- Knees open
- Sway if it feels good

Reminder to empty bladder

29. LEANING ON BIRTH BALL



10 minutes or 3 contractions

- Lean forward on ball
- Use wall for support

10 minutes or 3 contractions

- Supported half squat
- Use wall for support

Reminder to drink/snack



30. RESTING WITH BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Lean forward
- Rest in between contractions

Reminder to empty bladder



Where are your contractions? 4-1-1? 5-1-1?



31. SIT & CIRCLES ON BIRTH BALL

20 minutes

- Sit upright with back straight.
- Hip circle with pelvis
- Equal amounts of clockwise & counterclockwise

Reminder to drink/snack

Rotating and swaying your hips helps baby to descend

32. STAND & LEAN

20 minutes

Place birth ball on bed
Lean over
Breathe slowly

Reminder to empty bladder



33. SIDE LYING WITH BIRTH/PEANUT BALL

20 minutes

- Lay on LEFT side
- Raise RIGHT leg over birth ball

20 minutes

- Lay on RIGHT side
- Raise LEFT leg over birth ball

Where are your contractions? 4-1-1? 5-1-1?

NEED MORE TIME?

Labor along



THIS IS NORMAL!

Each labor is unique. This is normal!

Repeat:

- I am capable
- I am enough
- I am strong
- I will do this
- I am healthy
- I am safe



RE-START THIS GUIDE

- Simply repeat the steps in this guide
- Your body and your baby know what to do
- Your body and your baby do not follow a clock

CONGRATULATIONS!

Labor along

NOW WHAT?

- **Discuss with your provider what options are available for discharging from the hospital ASAP.**
 - **This may mean postponing circumcisions.**
- **Ask your family to have your rest area prepared for your arrival home**
- **Contact a postpartum doula or family for extra help at home**
- **Contact a lactation consultant for any breastfeeding issues.**

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Please contact us if you need additional support or if you have questions:

info@familytreesbirthplace.com

www.familytreesbirthprograms.com

