

## Parentcraft Classes

Parentcraft classes are available for all women and their birth supporters. Please speak with your Team Midwife to find out more information about when your team Parentcraft classes commence.

### Forth Valley Women & Children's web link

Further information can be accessed by logging into the Forth Valley web page: [www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/az-of-services/women-and-childrens](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/az-of-services/women-and-childrens)

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# BIRTH SUPPORTERS INFORMATION LEAFLET



## **Birth Supporters**

Within the Labour Suite we are delighted to offer the option of having up to two birth supporters to comfort you.

### **Before Selecting a Supporter**

When choosing your birthing supporters, it is important that you choose someone who makes you feel relaxed and as confident as possible. Birth supporters can come from a range of people which can include your partner, family members and friends. It is important that you talk to your birth supporters about what you want and don't want so they can appropriately assist you during this time.

It may be helpful to offer this leaflet to your intended birth supporter to give information about this role.

It is important to complete your birth plan during your pregnancy and discuss with your midwife and birth supporter/s in good time before the onset of labour. It may be helpful to fully discuss your birth plan to ensure your preferences for labour are understood.

We require you to have your chosen birth supporters named in your birth plan for safety and security purposes.

### **During Labour**

The main role of any birthing supporter is to provide support and encouragement.

Emotionally, women need to know that you are there for them 100% of the time and that you have confidence in them.

Labouring women may want you to:

- Massage their shoulders and back
- Help them to change into different positions that may be more comfortable

- Support and encourage them to breathe slowly and calmly through contractions
- Encourage them to eat small snacks and drink water
- Assist them with decisions such as pain relief

Every labour is different and it is quite common for a woman to change her mind about her birth plan. As a birth supporter, it is vital that you approach the labour and birth with an open mind and give support as requested at that time.

It may also be the role of the birth supporters to liaise with other family members and friends, keeping them updated of any progress and giving as much information as directed by you.

Simply by being there, remaining calm and giving reassurance throughout labour may be helpful. What many women find unhelpful is when a birth supporter is watching the television, using social media networks and if more than one, chatting with each other to the exclusion of the woman in labour.

It is important the birth supporters look after themselves. The Labour Suite is quite warm, therefore wearing appropriate light-weight clothing is recommended. It is important that as a birth supporter you eat and drink regularly. Birth supporters may wish to bring in their own snacks and drinks. There are also various eating facilities, please ask the midwife for details.

### **At Birth**

Although there may be two birth supporters present during labour and most deliveries, in the event of an emergency situation one birth partner may be asked to leave. This is to make it easier for staff to attend and give the necessary care quickly and efficiently.

Currently if a woman requires to go to theatre only one birth supporter can be in attendance. It is helpful if there is agreement about who is going to theatre. This should

be decided prior to labour and it would be helpful if this is documented within your birth plan.

All of your decisions should be included in your birth plan prior to labour so that your midwife can concentrate fully on giving the best care and attention and not being distracted mediating between birth supporters.

As birth supporters it is important to offer words of encouragement at the time of the birth but it is also essential, and in your partner's best interest, that the midwife is able to communicate directly with your partner. It is important that you listen to your midwife.

Birth supporters may be given the opportunity to cut the baby's cord at delivery where possible. Your midwife will discuss this with you on admission to labour ward (only one person can cut the baby's cord).

### **After Delivery**

Everyone may be excited and emotional after the birth. If you have been asked to inform other family and friends of the exciting news the best time to do this is after the midwife has carried out essential checks on mum and baby and following discussion with your partner on what information you are all happy to share.

Following the delivery, if all is well, your midwife will plan to discharge mum and baby after all necessary checks have been carried out usually within the first 6 to 24 hours. During this time mum and baby would remain in the labour ward. There are times when the midwife may advise that an admission to the post-natal ward is required (ward 8). Your midwife will advise you about visiting times.