

## Ways a Labor Partner Can Help

### **In Early Labor:**

- ◆ help her as she gets ready emotionally for labor
- ◆ encourage her; say that she's strong and ready
- ◆ offer her warm tea or broth; get her ice chips or a popsicle
- ◆ help her prepare to go to the hospital
- ◆ suggest a shower or bath
- ◆ remind her to focus and relax.

### **If she has trouble keeping in focus:**

- ◆ reassure and praise her
- ◆ give her an object or picture to look at during contractions
- ◆ suggest a walk or a position change
- ◆ ask extra people to leave the room
- ◆ place hands on her face gently and breathe with her
- ◆ massage in rhythm with her breathing.

### **If her belly hurts:**

- ◆ remind her to go to the bathroom often
- ◆ help her change positions, noting that the first contractions in a new position may be more uncomfortable
- ◆ with a light yet intentional touch, massage areas she directs you to
- ◆ place warm rice socks or cloth in the area that hurts.

### **If she is having trouble relaxing:**

- ◆ place your hand over her hand
- ◆ guide her to relax the areas you touch
- ◆ remind her to close her eyes between contractions and rest
- ◆ play music that helps her relax
- ◆ dim the lights in the room
- ◆ limit talking in the room
- ◆ suggest taking a bath.

### **If she is having hot flashes:**

- ◆ wash her neck and face gently with a cool, wet cloth
- ◆ give her ice chips
- ◆ use a fan.

### **If her back hurts:**

- ◆ help her use positions like kneeling on all fours, leaning forward, or side lying
- ◆ put a warm cloth, rice sock, or heat pack on her back
- ◆ put a cold cloth or ice pack on her back
- ◆ press firmly on her back (counter pressure) or use a hip squeeze
- ◆ help her stand and lean her back against a wall (with or without labor ball).

### **If her legs and arms get shaky:**

- ◆ hold her steady so she feels more in control
- ◆ rub her hands or feet
- ◆ place a blanket over her.

### **If her contractions stop or slow way down:**

- ◆ encourage her verbally that she is strong, making progress, and not alone
- ◆ massage her back, shoulders, hands, or feet
- ◆ try upright positions such as walking, leaning on a wall, or over the labor ball
- ◆ suggest taking a shower (triggers oxytocin release)
- ◆ discuss using acupressure with Spleen 6 (ankle area) or Ho-ku (hand area) to get uterus contracting
- ◆ remind her to frequently try to go to the bathroom (full bladder can slow labor).