

Breathing for Labour

WHY?

- It increases the amount of oxygen available for you and your baby
- It may help with relaxation
- It may help reduce or avoid panic
- It can help you feel more in control
- It can help the birth partner feel involved

HOW?

- Follow what your body demands of you, varying rate and depth according to need, normally faster and more shallow at the peak of a contraction
- Keep shoulders down and relaxed
- Keep mouth and jaw soft and loose
- Start each contraction with a *welcome breath* – an audible deep breath in and sigh out through a soft, loose mouth
- End each contraction with a *resting breath* – an audible deep breath in and sigh out, relaxing and letting go of any tension on the out breath
- Throughout each contraction concentrate on the *out breath* - think of blowing the pain away – let the in breath take care of itself
- Try thinking: *re-* as you breathe in, and *-lax* as you breathe out or *step* as you breathe in and *breathe* as you breathe out

POINTS FOR BIRTH PARTNERS

- Allow her to behave as instinctively as possible
- Be there breathing with her if she needs you to
- If necessary refocus her on her out breath by saying *blow, out, etc.*
- Remember that mouth breathing will give her a dry mouth, offer sips of drink regularly

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

- Get where she can see you
- Hold her face, ensure she is listening

Panic - *Candle blowing* or *SOS* (sigh out slowly)

Premature urge to push – *candle blowing* or *I must not push*
(short, short, short, long breaths out)

Baby crowning – *Candle blowing* or *I must not push*