

Supporting Your Partner Through Pregnancy



Highlights

Becoming a parent for the first time is both exciting and challenging. It helps to work together with a partner to prepare for the changes ahead. If a partner experiences tiredness, morning sickness, or discomfort, offering support can make a difference.

Planning time off work can be useful to be present for the birth.

If coping feels difficult, reaching out to friends, family, or support networks can provide guidance.

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Early Pregnancy

Discovering an upcoming pregnancy can bring a mix of emotions. Some may feel joy and excitement, while others may experience uncertainty or anxiety-both are normal.

Some couples choose to wait until the end of the first trimester to share the news, but this is a personal decision. This period can be used to adjust to the idea of parenthood and plan for the changes ahead.

Ways to stay involved during pregnancy include:

Attending medical appointments together.

Learning about baby essentials.

Communicating openly about feelings and expectations.

Researching pregnancy-related topics and discussing them with a partner.

Pregnancy can bring mood swings, which are natural. If a partner experiences anxiety or sadness, seeking professional advice can be beneficial.

Morning sickness can be managed by encouraging small, frequent meals. If vomiting becomes severe, consulting a healthcare provider is recommended.

The Second Trimester

As pregnancy progresses, symptoms like morning sickness may improve, and physical changes become more noticeable.

This is a good time to discuss:

Financial planning

Legal matters such as wills

Insurance options

Open and honest communication helps strengthen the relationship and prepares both partners for parenthood.

Ways to support a healthy pregnancy include:

Eating balanced meals together.
Staying active.
Reducing alcohol intake.
Avoiding smoking, especially if the pregnant partner is trying to quit.

The Third Trimester

The later stages of pregnancy can feel more real for both partners. Helpful actions include:

Attending regular medical check-ups.
Listening to the baby's heartbeat.
Learning about the birth process.
Taking prenatal classes together.
Visiting the birth location in advance.
Arranging time off work for the birth and postpartum period.

Bonding with the baby can begin before birth by talking or singing to them, as they can hear sounds from inside the womb.

As pregnancy progresses, physical discomfort may increase. Common experiences include:

Frequent waking at night
Increased trips to the bathroom
Changes in physical intimacy preferences

Support can be offered by:

Providing massages
Assisting with household tasks
Helping find comfortable sleeping positions

Preparing for the Birth

The role of a birth support partner is to provide emotional and physical encouragement during labor.

Before the due date, it helps to:

Talk to others who have supported someone during birth.

Watch videos and read about labor and delivery.

Attend prenatal classes.

Discuss the birth plan and remain flexible.

Plan transportation to the hospital or birthing center.

On the day of birth:

Ensure the hospital bag is packed.

Help with comfort measures, such as massage or warm/cold packs.

Provide reassurance and assist with breathing exercises.

Communicate with medical staff if needed.

If offered, participate in cutting the umbilical cord.

Begin bonding with the newborn through skin-to-skin contact.

Emotional Well-Being During Pregnancy

Some partners may feel left out during pregnancy, as much attention is focused on the expecting parent. It's important to acknowledge feelings and seek support when needed.

Depression and Anxiety

Partners can also experience emotional struggles during pregnancy and early parenthood. Hormonal changes, sleep disruptions, financial concerns, and work-life balance shifts can contribute to stress.

If coping becomes difficult, speaking with friends, family, or professionals can help. Strategies for managing stress include:

Exercise

Deep breathing techniques

Muscle relaxation

Yoga

If feelings of anger, jealousy, or frustration arise, seeking professional

support is important. Those experiencing persistent distress or thoughts of self-harm should seek immediate help from a healthcare provider or crisis support service.

Tools And Assistance

Many resources are available to support new and expecting parents, including:

Parenting support organizations

Mental health helplines

Online forums and communities for new parents

Counseling and support groups

Maintaining both physical and mental well-being is essential to providing the best care for a growing family.