



# How to support yourself during labour:

You may be excited about sharing the birth of your baby with your partner, family and friends. Unfortunately, due to new hospital rules to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep all patients and staff safe, partners are not allowed to be with women in labour or delivery. If you had made plans to have someone with you during labour, this could be very upsetting. If you are expecting to give birth in the next few months, please make sure to ask your health care provider about the rules for your facility. The rules may change depending on the number of COVID-19 cases in your community. Your birth experience can still be special; even if your partner can't be with you. Try to be prepared for the birth to make it as stress free as possible.

## A – Acknowledge your feelings

It is possible to understand the reason for the rules and to still be upset or even angry about what they mean for you and your birth experience. Under normal circumstances, your partner would be allowed to be with you and so it is normal to feel disappointed. . Talk to a trusted friend or family member about how you feel.



## B – Be prepared

Feeling prepared can help you to feel less anxious. In addition to the normal items you may pack in your hospital bag, you may want to have the following:

- Data and airtime on your phone so you can keep in contact with your loved ones
- Phone charger and plug adaptor
- Calming music downloaded on your phone to listen to when you are in labour (don't forget earphones)
- A loving focus point: this might be a photograph from home or a spiritual verse written on a piece of paper or a phrase of affirmation, for example: **“I am strong, I am not alone, my baby and I are a powerful team”**. You can place your focus point on or next to your bed to look at as you breathe through your contractions.



## C – Capture the moment

It's possible to share your birth experience with others, even if they can't be physically with you. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Create a WhatsApp group to alert family that you're in labour, or to tell them when you've given birth. It may be less tiring to share your news once with a group than to send messages to people separately.
- Use WhatsApp video call to allow your partner to give you words of encouragement when you're in labour or after the delivery. You could use the video function to introduce the baby to your partner, or you may choose to wait until your partner can fetch you and meet the baby in person.
- Ask a nursing sister to take photos of you and your baby on your phone so you can share them with your loved ones.

