

He did what?

- a guided list of what NOT to do in the labour room!

Giving birth can be a stressful process, largely for the person giving birth, but also for the partner standing beside her. For many couples, even the most well-laid birth plans fall to the wayside as situations possibly change and shift. Dads don't always say and do the right things—especially when their partner is in the delivery room, about to give birth. So Dad, if you're expecting, here's a list of what NOT to do!

Do not fall asleep!

Yes, labour is an incredibly intense experience for both partners, and yes, it's exhausting. But no, you cannot go into deep-snooze mode. If your partner isn't sleeping, neither are you. That's just the way it goes. You stayed up 48 hours straight when you were a young adult, right? You can do it again now.

Don't use your phone

If your partner is deep into labour, turn that ringer right off. Your boss, colleagues and friends will understand. If your partner agrees, send out a general update or two to the fam, but keep it to a minimum. Besides the hospital staff, the only person you should be listening to is your partner.

Don't whine

This is one time where your lady has every right to claim ALL the pity. Chances are she's been dealing with crazy-painful contractions and perhaps even pushing for a while. Now is not the time to complain that your back hurts from standing by her side or that your pulled muscle from working out yesterday is acting up. Just don't go there, guys. You can deal.

No screen time

Unless the two of you are watching some agreed-upon program to pass the time together, you're not allowed to rule the remote and get sucked into something that your partner doesn't want to watch and this includes the small screen on your phone. What to do instead? Focus on your partner, of course! Pull up a chair, hold her hand and keep your eyes her, not the screen.

Don't say everything is "amazing"

Your amazement of what your partner has just done can come across as a backhanded compliment, and she (as you may have noticed the last couple of months) is a bit sensitive right now. Also: Hold the "Eeeeeew!" when the baby (who will be covered in fluids) comes out. Again, preparation can prevent these foot-in-mouth moments.

Don't assume you can take photos

Discuss paparazzi privileges with your partner in advance. Some women are cool with being photographed in labour, and others want only "after" pics. Either way, you'll probably want to capture at least a good first family photo and fresh shots of your minutes-old baby. Obviously, selfies—with yourself all smiles and your partner labouring in pain in the background—are off-limits!!



Don't let your nerves show

Watching your partner give birth can, of course, be a stressful experience. But you need to be the picture of calm. Think about your own energy. If you're feeling very anxious and jittery, that can be really tough. Engage in deep breathing, and think calming thoughts. Your partner will pick up on what you project - be the duck.

Don't just tell them to breathe - breathe with them

While telling someone in labour to breathe deeply is an important reminder to mind their breath, it's far better to demonstrably breathe slowly and deeply. In the intensity of a contraction if your partner is breathing really quickly, or holding their breath, put your hand on their chest, take a big, demonstrative breath and encourage them to breathe with you.

Don't touch your partner the wrong way

Engaging in calming touch can be seriously helpful for someone giving birth, but not all touch is a good touch. When people touch their partners in a frantic or jerky way, people generally respond poorly to that. As humans, touch is important. Touch is the first sense that develops and is the last to leave us. Use your whole hand, not just your fingers - they will tire quickly anyway.

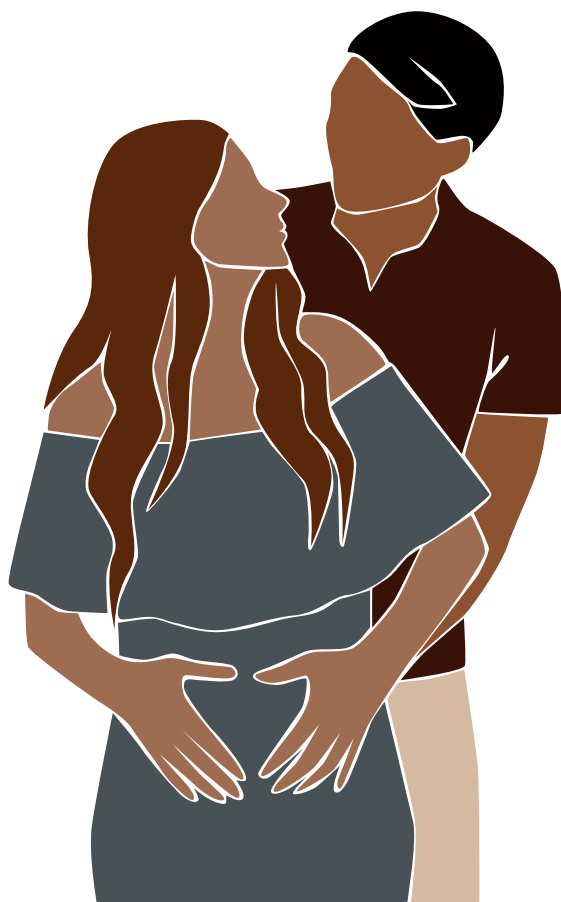
Don't wear jandals and shorts - bring options!

You won't know how cold or warm the delivery room will be until you get there, and it's likely that you will be there for some time. Make sure that you bring layers and options. Sometimes the room is freezing, and sometimes they are hot! Bringing an extra pair of pants or a sweatshirt might keep you more comfortable for what could be lengthy labour. Also, never, ever wear open-toed shoes to the hospital. Jandals are not recommended, especially if a situation arises where you may have to go into an operating room. Wear sneakers. Seriously!

So, there you go, a great starting point of what NOT to do when your partner is in labour. You may want to discuss these together and check if there's anything else you need to be mindful of and add to this list! You got this Dad!!

You're
not
alone

You are doing
GREAT!★



YOU
GOT
THIS!

I'M
HERE
WITH
YOU!