

mothers innate behaviour during birthing and support ideas:

If the mother is confident and feels safe to move around and make whatever noises she chooses, with the support of her birth supporters then she typically behaves as follows.

NB these have been identified by watching birth in “undisturbed” situations where mother is not under specific restrictions or technology, but is able to move and act as she chooses. This may be in hospital or at home.

These may be useful guides to reassure you of how your labour is progressing without needing vaginal examinations by a midwife.

| Mother's innate behaviour | Ideas for support/help |
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| <p>Early labour (ca 0-4 cm dilation) Contractions every 8 mins</p> <p>Talkative Excited Walking about or getting on with things Resting Interacting with surroundings/ people around her Rubbing belly or back during contractions Able to talk through contractions</p> | <p>Distractions (DVD, talking on phone, packing bag etc) Eating or drinking Bath/shower Walking around, swaying hips Sitting on birth ball Relaxations or visualisations</p> |
| <p>Active labour (ca 4-7 cm dilation) Contractions every 5 mins</p> <p>Less chatty Needs to breathe through contractions Likely to be leaning forward on to window sill, partner, wall etc during contractions</p> | <p>Counter pressure/massage “Dancing” with partner Leaning over table or window sill Bath/shower Music Tens machine or self hypnosis Rocking Breathing</p> |



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| <p>Active labour (ca 7+ cm dilation) Contractions every 3 mins</p> <p>Uncommunicative On some other planet Mooring, whale or roaring noises Singing Leaning forward over table Flexing knees Kneeling/all fours Drink from straw or suck flannel</p> | <p>All fours position rocking Leaning over birth ball, bed Breathing and actively relaxing Visualisations Firm massage/counterpressure Bath/pool Singing or counting through contractions Walking around “Hanging” from partner or rope</p> |
| <p>Transition (ca 9-10 cm dilation) Contractions every 1 min</p> <p>Shaky Frightened Angry Cold Seeking reassurance Retching with contractions</p> | <p>Reassurance and encouragement “Protection” Warm blanket or socks or cuddle Upright positions Birth pool Horse lips breathing/candle breathing Quiet</p> |
| <p>Rest and be thankful (cervix fully dilated) Contractions stop or slow</p> <p>Relaxed Sleepy</p> | <p>Peace Reassurance</p> |
| <p>Pushing (baby descending through vagina and perineum) Pushing contractions every 1 min</p> <p>Squatting positions/kneeling Roaring or deep voiced noises Unfocused eyes/unaware of surroundings</p> | <p>Physical support in squatting positions Counter pressure/massage Encouragement Description (or see herself) baby’s head appearing Breathing encouragement</p> |

