THE MUSLIM MOTHERHOOD

BIRTH PARTNERS GUIDE

You want to be there for her — really there. The good news is that birth partners aren't bystanders; you have a real and important job in that room. The person you love is about to do something hard, in a system that doesn't always see her clearly. Your job is to be her calm, her advocate, and her ally — so she can focus on bringing her baby into the world. Many partners want to be involved but aren't sure how, or worry about asking the wrong thing. This guide is here to give you that confidence.

Hold onto one thing throughout: the decisions are hers. You are not there to decide for her — you are there to make sure her voice is heard, and to speak for her when she cannot speak for herself.

1 KNOW HER RIGHTS

You can't protect what you don't understand. Before the birth, read the *Your Rights in Maternity Care* guide with her — it covers them in full. The essentials:

- Nothing can be done to her without her consent — every examination, every procedure, every time.
- She can refuse anything, including care offered "because it's policy." Policies are not law.
- She can request a female practitioner, more time, or a change of plan — and staff must consider it properly.
- She has the right to dignity, privacy, and respect at all times.

THE SENTENCE THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

"Can you give her a moment, and explain the options before anything happens?"

2 BE HER VOICE IF SHE'S ASKED YOU TO

No one can speak for her — but she can ask you to speak on her behalf. Agree it beforehand: if she can't advocate in the moment, does she want you to, and what would she want you to say? In labour, when she may not have the words, you carry out what she's already told you:

- Ask the questions she can't. Use BRAIN: the Benefits, Risks, Alternatives, what her Intuition says, and what if we do Nothing yet?
- Repeat her wishes clearly: "She has asked for a female doctor — is that possible?" or "She'd like more time before deciding."
- Make sure she's heard, not spoken over. If staff talk past her, bring it back: "What would *you* like to do?"
- Keep her birth plan to hand, and refer to it.

REMEMBER

Advocating is not being aggressive. It is being calm, clear, and persistent on her behalf.

3 FOLLOW HER LEAD

Take your cue from her and from her birth plan — not from your assumptions. Your job is to honour what she decided, not to override it.

- Know her birth plan and keep it to hand. It is the record of what she wants — refer to it, and remind staff of it.
- In the room, follow her. Things may change, and she may want something different than planned — that's her call to make, not yours to question.
- When she's asked for something, back her up clearly and calmly: "She'd asked for a female practitioner if one's available," or "She wanted more time before deciding." Then leave it with the staff.
- Support what she wants. Your role is to help her get it — not to decide it for her.

4 SUPPORT HER SPIRITUALLY

Your calm presence is itself an act of care. Take her lead here too:

- Make du'a for her — and ask if she'd like you to make it with her.
- Play the recitation of the Qur'an if it brings her calm — Surah Maryam in particular — but let her tell you what she wants in the moment.
- If fear creeps in, a gentle reminder of her strength and Allah's mercy can steady her — read whether she wants words or quiet.
- Stay calm yourself. She will feel your steadiness — or your panic. Choose steadiness.

5 THE PRACTICAL THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU

- **Bring:** snacks, water, phone chargers, her bag, parking cash, and her birth plan.
- **Learn the comfort measures:** pressure on her lower back, a hand to hold, a calm voice.
- **Look after yourself too** — eat and stay hydrated. You're no use to her if you fade.
- **Afterwards, she'll need you more than ever:** protect her rest and handle visitors. The birth is not the end of your job.

A FINAL WORD

The Prophet (pbuh) was gentle, present, and tender with his family. If you're her husband, being beside her in this — fully present, calm, and steady — is part of that example. As a birth partner, you are not a bystander to this birth. You are part of it.