Things Fathers Can Do to Support Their Pregnant Partners

1. Go with your partner to her prenatal visits.
2. During the second trimester, go with your partner if she needs an ultrasound.
3. Watch videotapes, listen to audiotapes, check out the Internet, or read books about prenatal development, birthing, and becoming a parent.
4. Help plan for the baby. Talk with your partner about what you both want for your baby.
5. Go to classes that will teach you and your partner about childbirth.
6. Help your partner stay healthy during pregnancy. Help her eat many different foods.
7. Help your partner stay away from street drugs and alcohol. Help your partner stay away from alcohol. Alcohol can cause birth defects. If you use illegal drugs, stop now, and if your partner uses them, get help for her. Also, encourage her to check with the doctor before taking any over-the-counter drugs or prescription drugs.
8. Make sure your partner stays away from dangerous household products. Strong cleansers, paint products, and insecticides can all harm your baby.
9. Exercise during pregnancy. Walk or swim together. Both are safe exercises and provide time together.
10. Be sure your partner gets enough rest. Help with the household chores. Encourage her to use relaxation exercises and join in. Stress can be very harmful to both mother and baby.
11. Understand the different changes both you and your partner are going through as you prepare for parenthood. Pregnancy causes many changes in how a woman feels about how her body is changing.
12. Support your partner’s choice on how to feed the baby. Breast milk is best for the baby. If mom chooses bottle feeding, you can often take over the feeding of the baby and give mom a rest.
13. To attach with your baby, take time to learn about the developmental stages and how nutrition, lifestyles, and stress can affect prenatal growth. Listen to your child’s heartbeat, feel the kicks.
14. Find an infant massage class and attend with your partner. Infant massage is a wonderful way to soothe a baby.
15. Learn how to bathe, feed, diaper, hold, and comfort a baby. All of these activities will build a father’s confidence and enhance bonding with the child.
16. Find a “New Fathers” support group or talk to other men who have had or are going to have new babies. Share feelings, ideas on supporting the pregnant mom, and tips to make sure you are taking care of yourself.