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Labour: Should I stay or should I go – a teen Dad's story

Even when your partner is in the early stages of pregnancy, horror stories of labour seem to float around, almost as if the people telling them slyly enjoy drilling fear into you!

Tales of tears in places you wouldn't dream of, stitches in places you definitely wouldn't want a sewing kit, and blood pooling around your partner, are enough to make many a strong man opt for pacing in the corridor.

Here on in I can only speak from personal experience but for your baby, for your partner and for yourself I say, "Be there".

Being there

For a start you cannot underestimate the emotional effect of the scenario. I can honestly say I've never been more proud of anyone in my life than I was of my partner, and being there to let her know that and help in any way I could was both rewarding and good for our relationship. I can't deny there's a feeling of helplessness, but there's always something you can do, even if it's as simple as fetching ice-cold water or being a human stress ball!

Secondly seeing your child come into the world is an amazing (if a little gory) sight, which I'm sure many men in the past have regretted missing out on. I freely admit I was somewhat apprehensive when the midwife turned to me and asked if I wanted to see the head midway through the pushing stage, and that I was terrified that while cutting the cord I might accidentally castrate my son! That certainly would have given him ammunition during his inevitable grumpy teenager phase!

Obviously if you're the type to faint at an episode of Casualty then it might be best to sit it out. In the end you're there to help and if you do pass out, the nursing staff will more likely just step over you!

However if you are able, I really do recommend being there. Then again if you decide not too don't worry too much, you've still got at least 18 years of childcare ahead of you!