

Natural Pain Relief in Labor & Child Birth



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Every woman experiences pain in a different way. The way you experience pain depends on your emotional, psychological, social, motivational and cultural circumstances. Every woman responds and copes differently with the pain of labor and child birth.

Preparation for birth can help reduce the experience of pain and reduce the anxiety, which can help you better cope with labor.

Gather information about labor. Talk to your nurse or doctor and attend antenatal classes. Discuss your preferences for pain relief with your care providers and support people before you go into labor. You can also record your preferences for pain relief in your birth plan.

Natural pain relief

There are a number of methods you can use to help you cope with your labor pain. This is an individual decision: some women are keen to avoid medications, while others are happy to consider all available options. You need to choose the best coping technique or combination that suits you and your needs.

Remember, your plan may change when you are in Labor. During your labor the care provider will continue to guide you and work with you according to your wishes.



Relaxation:

Being relaxed in labor has many benefits. Your body will work better if you are relaxed. Oxytocin and endorphins, two hormones that help your labor progress and naturally relieve pain, will be released more readily when you are relaxed.

Fear, tension and resistance are normal responses when you feel out of control or you are not sure what to expect next. On the other hand, relaxing and trusting that your body knows what to do will help you manage your pain. Learn how to relax, stay calm, and breathe deeply. Breathing techniques may help you to “ride the waves” of each contraction.

Remember that a relaxed mind is a relaxed cervix. If your face is relaxed, the muscles through your pelvis are, too.

Active birth:

Moving around and changing positions is the one of most helpful things you can do to manage the pain of labor and birth. Being able to move freely and rocking your pelvis can help you to cope with contractions. If you stay upright, gravity will also help your baby to move down through your pelvis.

Heat and water:

The use of heat can help to ease tension and discomfort in labor. Both hot and cold packs are useful as is being immersed in water in either a shower or bath.



Healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies may find that having a warm bath in labor help with relaxation and production of endorphins, your body's natural pain relief hormones. Heat and water reduce the pain of contractions and the pressures on your pelvis and muscle.

Touch and massage:

Feeling stressed and anxious makes pain seem worse. A massage can reduce muscle tension as well as provide a distraction between and during the contractions. Practice during your pregnancy and find out how you like to be massaged. At different stages during labor massage and touch will feel good and at other times you may find it distracting or annoying, so be mindful of that.

Alternative therapies:

Alternative therapies such as acupuncture, acupressure or aroma therapy can also be very effective, but should only be practiced by qualified professionals.

Not all birth places can offer every method of pain management. Talk with your care provider about the pain relief options available to you at your planned place of birth and which methods of pain relief can and can't be used together. You can choose one method or a few, or you change from one to another during labor.

Remember that it is important to keep an open mind and to have a positive attitude and confidence in your ability to give birth.