

Natural Pain Relief

A woman's environment, body, and mind all contribute to her perception of pain and decisions about medication in childbirth. You can use this list to expand your options in several ways. Try a new suggestion from each category in your practice sessions. Review it before discussing options with your labor partner. Pack your bag with it in mind. Hang it on the door of your birthing room for ideas in labor. Share it with your coach and doctor and ask for support in trying all the options available.

The Birth Place: Good Samaritan Hospital

Familiarize yourself with the hospital. Go on a hospital tour. Know what's available.

Discuss your goals with your physician.

Participate actively in decision making.

Try water therapy - shower, bath, Jacuzzi; if in bed, sponge or foot bath.

Privacy - within the limits of safety.

Music - soft and relaxing music for first stage, energizing for second stage.

Adjust lighting and temperature to your comfort.

Coping Techniques

Relax, particularly where you hold your tension.

Use breathing patterns to enhance relaxation.

Touch - massage, heat, cold, pressure, tap a rhythm.

Assume a variety of positions that use gravity to help your baby descend.

Sway, rock, dance to keep your pelvis mobile.

Urinate frequently.

Eat and drink as you can to maintain strength and energy.

Count, chant, hum, moan - make releasing, relaxing noises.

Emotional Well-Being

Rely on companionship and support. Let those around you know what you want and need.

Practice relaxation, focusing, and breathing together with your partner to build trust and confidence.

Have confidence in your body's ability to cope with labor and the birth of your baby.

Think of your baby.

Figure out what your needs are and communicate them.

Focus on something positive that you see, hear, feel, smell, taste or imagine.

Pray or meditate.

Do affirmations, visualizations.

Expect the unexpected.

Concentrate only on the moment and on responding to this one contraction.

View pain in labor for what it is - normal, healthy, productive, intermittent - and ending with the ecstasy of your baby's birth!