

*Make this  
labor your own  
experience!*

**Understand** as much as you can about pregnancy and childbirth by reading and taking classes.

**Learn** as much as you can about reducing pain and discomfort during labor and share your ideas with your doctor and partner.

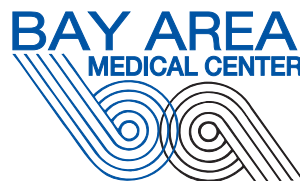
**Be flexible** – remember that plans can change quickly once your labor starts and progresses.

*For more information about labor and childbirth, or any other women's health issues, contact the OB-GYN Department at Bay Area Medical Center*



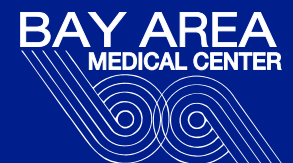
*What You Should Know About*

***Comfort and Pain Relief  
Measures During Labor***



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## Childbirth

Childbirth is...amazing! Bringing a new person into the world can be an exciting and rewarding experience. But it is also normal to have some anxiety and worry about the baby's health, about being a new parent, and about going through labor.

How will you cope with the pain in labor is a common concern most pregnant women have. Try to keep in mind that everyone's labor is different, that each woman's perception of the pain in labor may be different, and that most women use some form of pain relief during labor and delivery.

What are your choices? There are several different types of pain relief methods for you to choose from. Some involve the use of medicine; some do not. Outlined in this brochure are some examples of what may work for you.

## Relaxation and Non-Medicinal Methods

Some of the things you may try (and your labor nurse and coach will help you) to relieve pain include:

- Back Rubs
- Cool Washcloths
- Rocking
- The "Lunge"
- Hot Showers
- Walking
- Warm Packs
- Cold Packs
- Slow Dancing
- Pelvic Tilt
- Stretching
- Repositioning (like knee-chest)

Please...ask your nurse for help in trying different methods to find one that is right for you – or several that may work for you!

## Medications

The medications commonly used at Bay Area Medical Center are:

### Demerol

Given as a shot into your muscle, it can help in early labor to relieve pain and allow you to get some needed rest. You may get sleepy after you get this for 2 to 4 hours.

### Nubain

Given usually right into your IV line (so you do not need another poke!), these medications can help you cope with the labor pains by decreasing the pain, and helping you to relax between contractions. You may get sleepy after getting one of these (occasionally some nausea may occur) and usually lasts 1 to 2 hours. The baby may get sleepy, too.

### Intrathecal Narcotics (ITN)

This is an injection you will get into your back, similar to a spinal anesthetic, but you will not get numb. You will still be able to walk and move around, but it blocks pain perception while leaving touch sensation intact. It is usually given when you are in active labor (4 to 8 cm), and some of the side effects that women experience are itching, nausea (sometimes vomiting) and some women cannot empty their bladder for a short period of time after delivery.

### Epidural Anesthesia

An epidural is usually done with you on your side or sitting up; you curl up tightly over your pregnant abdomen to give the anesthesiologist the best view of your spine. The area of the back is then washed with a very cold cleansing solution. You are then numbed with a local anesthetic to minimize the pain you feel from the actual epidural needle going in. A test dose is delivered to be sure that the medication is going into the right space. The needle is removed and a thin, plastic catheter is left in your back and taped down for security. You will not be able to walk around once the epidural has been given, but many moms report being able to wiggle their toes and a slow return to sensation within hours of having the epidural medications discontinued. Some common side effects are itching and shivering.

## Which pain relief method is right for you?

Different methods may work at different times during your labor. It is best to review several methods during your pregnancy **before** you go into labor so you can think about what methods you would like to try. Discuss the methods with your doctor and with your partner so you can share your ideas. And...when you come to the hospital, share your ideas with your labor nurse so she can help you try the methods you are interested in.

*Enjoy your journey to a new beginning and to your beautiful results!*