

LABOR & DELIVERY PAIN RELIEF OPTIONS

	Non-Medicine Comfort Measures	Nitrous Oxide (ni-trous ox-ide)	IV pain medicine (Nubain®)	Epidural
What is it?	Changing positions, massage, water, touch, music and other non-medicine comforts.	A gas you breathe in through a mask.	A pain medicine called opiates. Half a dose is given through a tiny tube in a vein, called an IV and half through a shot in your arm.	A pain medicine given to you through a tiny tube in your back called a catheter.
Who gives it to me?	Your support person, family, doula, or staff can all help.	Your nurse sets the machine up for you once your doctor or midwife has ordered it. You breathe it in yourself as needed.	Your nurse can give it to you once your doctor or midwife has ordered it.	The anesthesia team will come to your room.
How will it affect me?	Will help your body and mind stay relaxed and work through contractions.	Changes how you feel pain so it hurts less. Some say it “takes the edge off” contractions. Helps you relax. It allows you to control the amount of medicine. If you do not like the feeling, you can stop breathing it.	Changes how you feel pain so it hurts less. Some say it “takes the edge off” contractions. Helps you relax.	Blocks the feeling in your legs. You may feel no pain or pressure. If you do feel pain, talk to your nurse. We can help. Your legs will feel heavy, may tingle, and you may not be able to move them. You may feel pressure.
What are the common side effects?	None.	You may feel drowsy, lightheadedness, or silly.	You may feel flushed, warm, dizzy, sleepy, or unsteady.	Your blood pressure may decrease causing your baby’s heart rate to drop. We can give you medicine to help this.
How will it affect my baby?	None.	Can go through your placenta to your baby. It leaves your baby as soon as your baby takes his first breath.	Can go through your placenta to your baby. It may make your baby sleepy.	Lasts until the baby is delivered. Usually takes about 2 hours for the effects to wear off.
How long does the relief last?	Throughout labor and birth of your baby.	As long as you are breathing through the mask. When you stop breathing it in, it leaves your body in 1 minute.	About 2 hours. Second and third doses may not work as well.	Most often given during active labor.
When should I get it?	You can use comfort measure at any time, even before you go into labor.	When you are in active labor.	May be given in early labor. Works best in active labor. Rarely given if it looks like your baby will be born soon.	Bed only.
Can I walk around?	Yes, it is encouraged.	Yes, but with help.	Not until the effects of the drug have worn off.	No
Will I need to be on a fetal heart rate monitor?*	Yes, for the first 20 minutes you are in labor and delivery. Your doctor or midwife will decide how often you will be monitored after that.	Yes, for the first 20 minutes you are in labor and delivery. Your doctor or midwife will decide how often you will be monitored after that.	Yes, until the effects of the drug have worn off.	Yes, for the entire time you are in labor.
Will I need an IV?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Can I eat and drink?	Yes, it is encouraged.	Yes	Yes	No, only ice chips.
Can I get up to the bathroom?	Yes	Yes	Yes, with help.	No. You will have a small tube, called a catheter, to drain urine from your bladder.

*Fetal monitoring for patients with health risks for themselves, or their baby, will be determined by the Obstetrician or Nurse Midwife