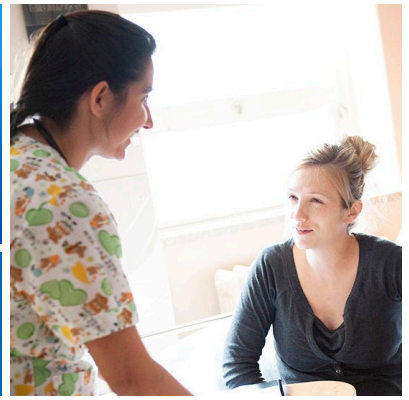


Giving birth

Managing your pain naturally



You're preparing for the unique moment that is the birth of your child. This fact sheet tells you what you can do to better control your pain in a natural way. Read it carefully.

Pain relief methods: do I have a choice?

Pain during childbirth is normal: it's a sign that labour is progressing. There are several methods to relieve pain or help you manage it better. See those described in this sheet. Most often, the delivery goes well and you can choose the method(s) you prefer.

Towards the end of your pregnancy, use your prenatal appointments to ask your doctor any questions you may have. Feel free to discuss any concerns with your doctor.

The healthcare team will do their best to make sure everything goes as you wish. But in any delivery, there can be unexpected events. Your condition or your baby's may lead the team to recommend a specific method. Also, if an emergency arises, decisions will have to be made quickly. Be prepared for this.

How can I manage my pain?

There are many techniques you can use to control the pain of contractions and feel more in control.

These techniques involve:

- relaxing
- moving and changing position
- breathing properly
- distracting yourself from the pain of labour



What can I do during labour?

Maintain a calm atmosphere

A calm atmosphere in the room creates a bubble of intimacy and helps you relax. Why not dim the lights or listen to soft music? If you wish, you can also limit the comings and goings of visitors. Women are advised to bring only one person to accompany them during labour. This support person can help maintain quiet in the room.

Take advantage of the support offered

Your partner, birth companion (doula) or any other significant person, as well as the Birthing Centre staff, are there to encourage and comfort you. Take advantage of their presence, both for your physical (thirst, change of position, etc.) and emotional (reassurance, guidance, etc.) needs.



Use heat and water

To relieve your pain, you can place a hot water bottle or a warm Magic Bag on your skin. The heat source should be left in place for 20 minutes. If you have lower back pain, for example, apply it to the area where the pain is greatest. The nurse or the person accompanying you will prepare the hot water bottle or Magic Bag for you.

The warmth of water helps soothe tension and relax muscles. The simple contact of water on skin also promotes relaxation. The Birthing Centre is equipped with a few hydromassage baths and showers. Taking a bath often provides greater relaxation because of the flotation effect.

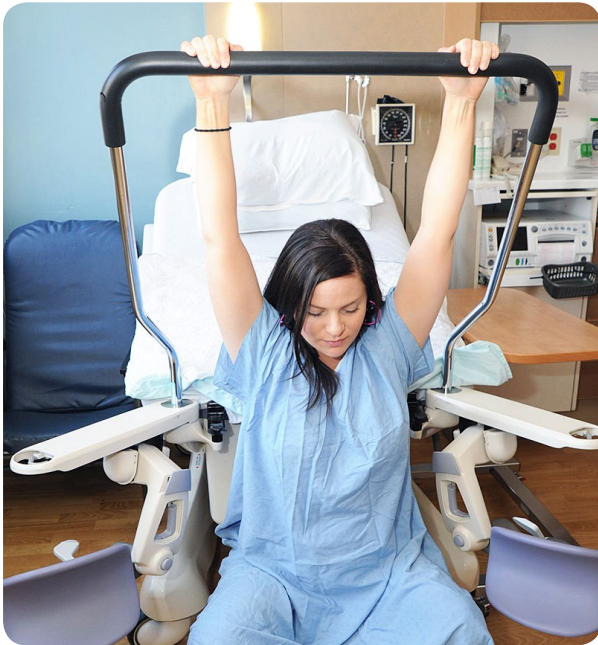


DID YOU KNOW?

Moving helps your labour and improves your baby's position, especially the head, which makes it easier for the baby to descend.

Try different positions

If possible, don't stay in bed during your entire labour. Take a few steps around the bedroom. To vary your position, you could, for example, crouch down on the floor with your knees on cushions. Every half-hour or so, it's a good idea to change position. The person accompanying you or the nurse can help you with this.



Use a birthing ball

A birthing ball can help you relax. It also makes it easier for the baby to descend. For example, you can sit on it and rock slightly from front to back, or lean on the ball against the wall while standing. The nurse can show you the most helpful positions.

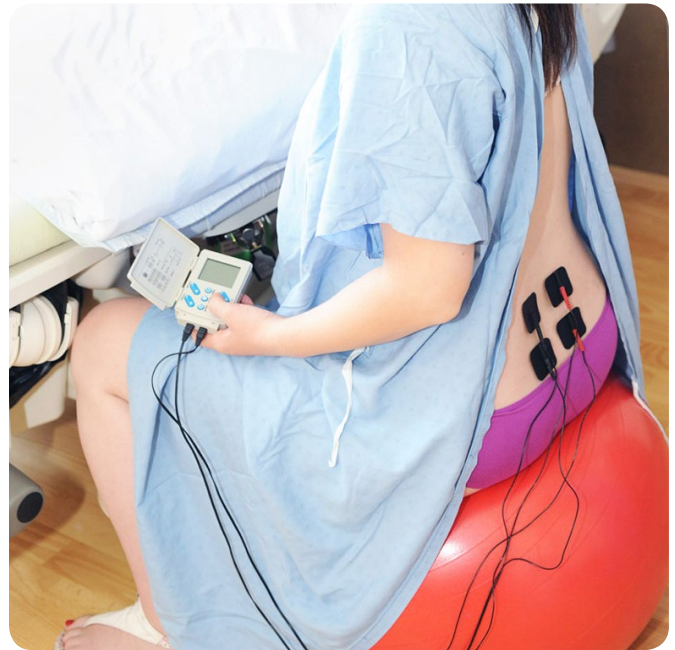


Use massage

The person accompanying you can give you a massage. Sit on the birthing ball and rest your head on the bed so they can massage your back. This is another way to relax, with your companion's assistance.

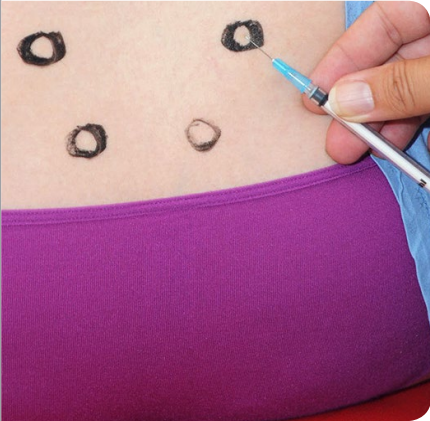
Connect to the TENS

The TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator) is a device that generates tiny pulses, or electrical stimulations. These pulses are delivered to your muscles and nerves by electrodes placed on your skin. They can help relieve mild lower back pain. The nurse can set up the device and show you how it works. You control the intensity of the stimulation. You should be able to feel the small electric pulses. They may cause mild pain, but in this way they help reduce the (more intense) pain of childbirth.



Receive sterile water injections

If you have severe lower back pain, the nurse may inject you with small amounts of sterile water, called “water papules”. However, the injection causes mild pain. Some women say they feel a burning sensation when getting



the injection. It provides relief because it stimulates the production of natural pain-relieving hormones (endorphins). Also, the mild pain caused by the injection diverts your attention from the pain of labour.

Sterile water injections can be used at any time during labour. For more information, ask the staff.

Use the Bonapace Method

The Bonapace Method combines several techniques: massage, breathing techniques, relaxation, and visualization. If you're interested in this approach, you can take a prenatal training course to learn more.

By massaging specific points on the body, some of the discomfort of labour can be prevented. Pressure is applied to areas of discomfort, called “trigger points”. This stimulates the production of pain-relieving hormones, which then reduces the labour pain. The partner performs the massages and applies pressure.



Throughout your labour, you can count on the presence and support of the whole team!

Who can I contact for help or to ask questions?

If you have questions, discuss them with a health professional at your next visit, or contact the nurse in the Perinatal Clinic.

When you're back home, if you feel sad, or if you have difficulties related to being a parent, or with your partner, don't hesitate to contact the Perinatal Clinic.



USEFUL RESOURCES

For information on methods of relieving pain with medication, please refer to the fact sheet:

[*Giving birth - Pain medications that can help you*](#)

You received the guide *From Tiny Tot to Toddler* at your first medical visit. You can also consult it online:

> www.inspq.qc.ca/en/tiny-tot

To learn more about pregnancy, delivery, or follow-up care, visit our internet site.



Videos, other fact sheets, and more resources are available at:

centredesnaissanceschum.com

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca