

41- Labor Pain

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Overview

You can choose from a few types of pain relief for childbirth. These include:

- Medicine. Your doctor may offer different types of pain medicine while you are in labor.
- Comfort measures. This can include things like breathing techniques and massage.

You also can use a combination of these choices.

You can write down your choices for pain relief in a birth plan. A birth plan is a list of what you want during labor. Your personal needs are important when you make this choice. The right choice is the one that feels right to you. **Every labor is different. Some women go into labor planning to use comfort measures only and later find that they need pain medicine.** Plan for what you want. But be aware that you may change your mind during labor.

What medicines can you use for pain relief?

If you decide to take medicine to help your pain during labor, here are some medicines that may be used.

Local anesthesia. You get a shot of medicine to numb the area and relieve pain around the vaginal opening.

Regional anesthesia. A doctor injects medicine into a space around the spinal cord. This is called an **epidural**. It's used during labor to numb your lower body. A **spinal block** is an injection of pain medicine into the spinal fluid. It quickly and fully numbs the pelvic area. In some cases, a doctor combines a spinal block with an epidural.

Opioids. These are pain relievers given through a vein or as a shot in the muscle. They can help ease anxiety and pain. But they don't stop pain completely.

What comfort measures can you use for pain relief?



TopLine MD Alliance

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- **Breathing techniques:** Breathing in a rhythm can distract you from pain. Childbirth classes can teach you how to do focused breathing.
- **Distraction:** You can walk, play cards, listen to music, watch TV, take a shower, or read. These can help take your mind off your contractions.
- **Massage:** Your birth partner can massage your shoulders and lower back during contractions. Strong massage of the back muscles during contractions may reduce back labor pain.
- **Imagery:** You can imagine a peaceful place. For instance, you can think of contractions as waves rolling over you.
- **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture treatment during labor may help you manage the pain.

Pain management can be done with your input to help ensure a painless delivery. 😊