

Pain Relief During Labor

*Preparing for pain **before** labor begins is essential!*

Suggestions for helping the mother-to-be

- ◆ **Acknowledge that it is normal to expect some pain during labor**
But assure her that together you will find ways to ease and manage the pain.
- ◆ **Assure the mother that she has a right to pain relief**
Gently find out if she has any unstated beliefs or expectations connected to the role of woman's suffering during labor. Do not judge them, but still provide reassurance.
- ◆ **Review all pain management options with her**
Thoroughly discuss and describe both medication and non-pharmacological methods whether to be used as primary support or as adjuncts.
- ◆ **Discuss the risks and benefits of epidural**
Plan for ways to avoid need for any intervention, but agree on signals that she can give when she has passed a threshold of tolerable pain and needs extra support.
- ◆ **Empower her to make all decisions regarding pain control**
Never coerce or "guilt-trip" her about what kind of pain relief methods she chooses, whether medical or alternative.
- ◆ **Help her work through the fear of pain**
Use emotional processing tools and reflective listening to ease any undue fear about feeling pain during a healthy labor.
- ◆ **Be encouraging:** "You can do it, nature has helped women throughout history."
- ◆ **Assure the mother that all pain and discomfort will pass**
Let her know that in most cases the natural endorphins, neurohormones, and opiates produced by the brain will help her to forget much of the pain after delivery.
- ◆ **Use hypnotic and visualization techniques**
Guide her with suggestions that her own body's defenses will protect her and help her through the pain. Do this regularly during the last trimester and make tapes of guided induction that she can listen to every night.
- ◆ **Encourage further education and other preparations**
Suggest that the woman and her partner view films of labor and imagine how they might deal with the contractions. Refer parents to high-quality childbirth education.