



COPING WITH LABOR

LET'S THINK OF LABOR IN A DIFFERENT WAY

We want to help you prepare for labor and the birth of your child. Discomfort in labor has a positive purpose. It is normal and there are things we can do to help you. If you are scared, your body will not allow you to progress. Instead, it helps to focus on staying relaxed. We will help you decide what is best for you as your labor moves along.

WHAT IS LABOR AND WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

During labor you will have pain in your womb (uterus) that pushes your baby down and opens your cervix (the opening of your uterus) and your vagina. These are called contractions. A contraction will feel like a strong period cramp and will last from 30-60 seconds. The contractions will get stronger as labor goes on. Labor is different for everyone, and we don't know how strong your contractions will be ahead of time. Your way of coping will change through labor. We want you to have an idea of what is available to help you.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SUPPORTING YOU DURING YOUR LABOR AND CHILDBIRTH.
PLEASE TALK ABOUT COPING WITH LABOR WITH YOUR MIDWIFE OR DOCTOR WHEN YOU
TALK ABOUT YOUR BIRTH PLAN.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO COPE WITH LABOR

Type	What is it?
Having a Support Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A “doula” is a labor support person that can help decrease labor pain, C-section rates, and postpartum depression
Massage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Touch from a loved one or health professional can improve your body’s response to pain
Hot or Cold Packs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hot and cold can also decrease pain. These are available at the hospital and you can use them at home.
Changing Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changing positions every 30 minutes and walking helps laboring people feel more comfortable and helps labor progress.
Birthing Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sitting on a birthing ball helps open your hips and may be more comfortable than laying down. You may use one at home and we also have them in the hospital.
Making Noises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moaning, humming, and singing are all normal in labor and help release intense sensations.
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Music helps you feel calm and more comfortable. Create playlists to play during labor to aid relaxation.
Getting in Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hydrotherapy is a great way to labor. It helps decrease pain and increase comfort.
Rest Between Contractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relaxing your whole body between contractions conserves energy to help keep you going through your whole labor.
Breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “In through the nose, out through the mouth” is a cleansing breath that helps you stay calm. You may change your breathing pattern as your labor progresses.
Visualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start visualizing (seeing things in your mind) during pregnancy. You can imagine a comfortable, safe space or imagine your labor and how you will cope.

MEDICATIONS TO HELP YOU COPE WITH LABOR

Type	What is it?	How does it help?
Intravenous (IV) Pain Medications Safe for you and your baby.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medications called opioids that are given through an IV or as a shot into your muscle or both. ● An IV is a small tube placed into a vein that is used to give fluids ● Your baby will need to be monitored during this time. 	This medication will take away some of the pain of labor and may allow you to sleep for a short period of time.
Nitrous Oxide (Laughing gas) Safe for you and your baby.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A gas that is mixed with oxygen and given by a face mask that you hold to your face. ● Decreases anxiety and helps you deal with the pain. ● It is inhaled 30 seconds before a contraction starts. It leaves your body after a few breaths. 	Decreases anxiety and helps you deal with the pain. You are the only person who can use the face mask.
Epidural Safe for you and your baby.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Medication is given through a small tube placed into the areas around your spinal cord in your back. ● It runs into your back until you have your baby ● This helps with most of the cramping, but you may still feel pressure. You will be able to push your baby out. 	Takes away most of the discomfort from the waist down and will allow you to sleep. You will be able to deliver your baby.