






# Pain Relief During Labor

Type of Pain Relief	Summary	Benefits	Risks	More Info
<b>Natural pain relief, without medicine</b> 	There are many options. We suggest breathing techniques, music, aromatherapy, warm packs, position changes, birthing ball, walking, hydrotherapy (bathtub), sterile water papules, and hypnobirthing.	These can help you calm your mind and body, and help you cope with pain. Most of these have been used for thousands of years!	No risks! But these may not be enough, based on how bad your pain is and how long it lasts.	You may bring your own music and aromatherapy. You can be monitored while in the bathtub and use Pitocin if needed.
<b>A support person or doula</b> 	A doula is a person trained to help you during labor. They provide emotional support, guidance, education, and massages. Many doulas also help with breastfeeding and do home visits after birth.	We get great feedback from our patients who say they love doula services. Doulas have been shown to reduce the rate of C-sections.	No risks! (There may be a cost if you hire a doula).	You may be eligible for a CHA doula: ask your doctor or midwife. CHA doulas speak 14 different languages.
<b>Pain Medicine (opiate analgesics)</b> 	We can give you strong pain medicine, such as morphine.	These relieve pain well (but not 100%) and will calm you. This may help you sleep for a few hours.	They can make you itchy, drowsy or nauseous. We don't use them too close to birth because they can affect the baby's breathing and muscle tone right after they are born.	Usually used early in your labor.
<b>Nitrous Oxide Gas</b> 	You breathe in this gas using a mask. You hold the mask to your face during contractions. The gas has no odor or taste.	You can control this yourself. It can be used for a short time to help you relax. It takes away pain fairly well. There are no known effects on the baby.	It can sometimes cause nausea, dizziness or a "bad feeling". These side effects go away quickly when the gas is stopped.	This is newer in the U.S. but has been used in Europe for many years.
<b>Epidural Anesthesia</b> 	This medicine is given through a tube placed in your lower back. It can relieve pain by causing some numbness from the waist down.	It takes away most of the pain of labor. You will be awake and still be able to push. More medicine can be added, and it can be turned off if needed. No known effects on the baby.	You will need to stay in bed. It can cause your blood pressure to drop. Rarely, it can cause a spinal headache (this can be treated). Very rarely, it can cause a risk to your nerves.	This is the most common type of pain relief during labor in the US. Studies have NOT shown that epidurals cause long-term back pain or an increased chance of C-section.