

# LABOR COMFORT MEASURES

## POSITION CHANGES

Changing your position can help ease the pain of the contractions. Every 30 minutes to an hour try a new position. Any of these may help with correcting fetal positioning making delivery easier.

- Walking
- Slow-dancing
- Squatting
- Sitting
- Getting on your hands and knees
- Lying on your side
- Kneeling
- Swaying
- Using a birth ball (sit, lean, bounce, sway or roll back and forth)
- Pelvic Rock



## WATER

Many women in labor find that a shower helps to relieve tension and pain. Point the spray on your abdomen, lower back or wherever it feels the best.

## HEAT AND COLD

The use of heat or cold can be used to help you feel comfortable. Using heat can be relaxing during labor and may ease discomfort.

Cool wash clothes also feel good and can be placed on the forehead or the nape of the neck especially during active labor, transition and pushing.

## TOUCH AND MASSAGE

Some women like to be touched during labor, and for some, it may be irritating. You may like massage during some of your labor, but not during other parts. Your partner can massage different areas. You might find that effleurage (very light stroking) is helpful, or you may prefer a more forceful touch. Some women like to have just one part of their body massaged such as the foot, hand or back. It is important to try different types.



## PRESSURE/COUNTERPRESSURE

This is a type of massage usually used when you feel a great deal of pressure in your lower back. This can happen with back labor or when pushing. Counterpressure is done by your support person to help relieve the pressure and/or backache. The support person presses the heel of their hand or their fist against your lower back during a contraction. You will need to tell your support person what feels best.

The double hip squeeze is helpful as well. With the mom in a comfortable hands and knees position, the labor partner places his hands on both hip bones pointing the thumbs toward the spine. The hip bones should be pushed “in and up” towards mother’s body.

## **BREATHING TECHNIQUES**

These can be a great tool in having the mother think about breathing instead of the contraction. It also may keep her from hyperventilating or holding her breath. Breathing patterns can consist of deep, abdominal breathing or if the contractions get more intense, a more shallow, rhythmical breathing.

## **RELAXATION TECHNIQUES**

Remember, if you tense up during labor, you may find your contractions to be more uncomfortable and harder to manage. Relaxation is key and it is important for you and your partner to practice relaxation together as a team.

## **ATTENTION FOCUSING**

Using a focal point during labor can help to take your mind off the pain of the contraction. With your eyes open, look directly into the eyes of your support person or stare at a picture or object nearby.

## **VOCALIZATION**

Rhythmic, low moaning with the contractions may benefit you through your labor. Saying a phrase repeatedly during a contraction like “I am strong” or “for my baby” may help as well.

## **FLUIDS**

Stay hydrated. The lack of fluids can affect your body and make labor more difficult. If labor is progressing normally, you should drink water, juice, soda and suck on popsicles.

## **PLEASANT TASTES**

Since the breathing patterns may make your mouth feel dry, using ice chips, lollipops, popsicles or flavored lip balm will be of help.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORTS**

This would include room temperature, music and lighting.

## **AROMATHERAPY**

You may find certain smells to be soothing, such as lavender. There are lotions and oils available for you to choose.

## **EMPTY YOUR BLADDER**

It is important to go to the bathroom frequently. Have your labor support person remind you often.

## **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

Your labor partner and/or doula can provide encouragement and physical comfort to you while you are in labor. A strong support system is very beneficial and is an important comfort measure.

