



# Patient Information Sheet

## Labour Pain Management

### *How to cope*

- Understand the birth process and accept as normal - the 1<sup>st</sup> step in coping. This is your birth journey. Be proud - no-one else can do it!
- Each contraction welcomed - a step closer to the birth - this is your baby's birthday - a day to always remember!
- Psycho-emotional / spiritual responses, fear makes it worse; trust your instincts; determination; self awareness and focus.
- Distraction - music, TV, counting etc.
- Visualization - see your cervix opening & baby coming, pelvic floor muscle relaxation.
- Breathe and move with the pain.
- Wear something comfortable but easy to take off, wear socks to keep feet warm.
- Support person - empathy, don't feel sorry for her (analogy the elite athlete straining to win, feel proud, encourage but don't try to do it for her NEVER imply she's not doing it right! Lots and lots of praise.
- Limited in time, end result, bonding - talk to your baby.
- Don't hold back - say and do whatever you need, vocalising pain is healthy - a good form of release (feel better if you yell or curse when you stub your toe!)
- When the going is getting tough - push yourself a bit further - I'll just get through the next one.
- Don't watch the clock - it's an unknown journey.
- Avoid negative distractions - unnecessary conversation, vaginal examinations unless absolutely necessary.

### *Pain relief – non medical*

- Upright position, gravity – less pressure on spine.
- Use of ball, beanbag, mat.
- Movement and position changes, rocking.
- Privacy, dimmed lights – create feeling of safety.
- Keep bladder empty – go to toilet every couple of hours.
- Heat packs, warm shower or bath.
- Maintain hydration & energy - drink plenty - your body works better.
- Keep warm - muscles work better and don't cramp up.
- Massage - use of oils.
- Aromatherapy eg lavender oil or other oil blends.
- Homeopathy eg rescue remedy.
- Relaxation breathing / techniques.
- Intradermal water injections for severe back pain.

### *Medical options*

- Nitrous oxide gas - quick and easy, eliminated quickly, no known negative effect on baby.
- Pethidine - narcotic; relaxes muscles & initially slows contractions; goes to the baby; can make you sleepy & less able to connect with your labour; can slow baby's breathing; can interfere with baby feeding - by-product slow to leave baby's system (days).
- Epidural - use local anaesthetic and narcotic, sometimes difficult to insert; good relief of pain; less goes to the baby; interferes with ability to push; more instrumental birth & caesarean birth; interferes with oxytocin production and bonding.

***Please speak to the midwife or your doctor if you would like more information***