

c. Pain Relief

MODULE 7

For many women, the breathing, relaxation, and comfort positions you have practiced during your pregnancy will be all you need during labour. However, some women find that these alone are not enough, and they need other kinds of pain relief.

Having a trusted support person with them throughout labour has been shown to help women manage labour pain better.



Different types of pain relief are available depending on where you deliver your baby. Talk to your health care provider during your prenatal visits to find out what is available.

The following table presents the different types of pain relief that can be used to relieve the pain during labour.

THE TYPES OF PAIN RELIEF DURING LABOUR	
Type	Description
Analgesics (medication for pain relief)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analgesics are given by injection in the hip muscle and are commonly used during labour. You generally feel the effect about 15 to 20 minutes following the injection. • Analgesics make you feel drowsy. They may make you feel nauseous or vomit. • Many women find this method very effective while others do not. • Analgesics can build up in your body and affect the baby's breathing after birth. For this reason, the amount of analgesics that can be given depends on the stage of labour and the condition of your baby.
Entonox or Nitronox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a combination of gas that is inhaled using a face mask during contractions. • This method is suggested for use during the transition stage (the end of the first stage) when the contractions are very strong. It is also used to help with pushing during the second stage. • The gas has a relaxing effect. It gives you a floating feeling and some dizziness, but it does not harm the baby. The effects go away as soon as you begin to breathe normal air.
Epidurals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication is injected into your lower back and takes away most of the feeling between your waist and the tips of your toes. • Epidurals allow you to stay awake during the delivery. • Only a specially trained doctor can give you an epidural. Because of this, epidurals are not available in all hospitals.
Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve (TENS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TENS is another method to relieve pain. A device which produces a light electrical current numbs the nerves so that you feel less pain. This method is safe for both the mother and the baby. • The TENS unit is connected to the skin by electrodes places on the abdomen or on the back. • In order to use this method during delivery a physiotherapist must show you how to use it beforehand. Talk to your doctor or physiotherapist if you would like more informations.