

# Best Start – Prenatal Education Program

## Comfort Measures

**best start**  
**meilleur départ**  
Resource Centre/Centre de ressources

by/par health **nexus** santé



# Story

**Domenic**

**Anna**



# Understanding Labour Pain

- ↓blood supply to the uterus
- Stretching of the cervix and lower uterus.
- Pressure and pulling on pelvic structures.
- Distension of vagina and perineum during the second stage of labour.
- Prolonged use of the uterine muscle from contractions.



# The Importance of Labour Pain



**P**urposeful  
**A**nticipated  
**I**ntermittent  
**N**ormal



# Pain vs. Suffering

**Pain** is an unpleasant physical sensation.

**Suffering** is the emotional reaction to that physical sensation which may lead to trauma.

# Gate Control Theory



“The balance between painful and non-painful stimuli that reach your consciousness determines your perception of pain and it’s severity”. (Simkin).

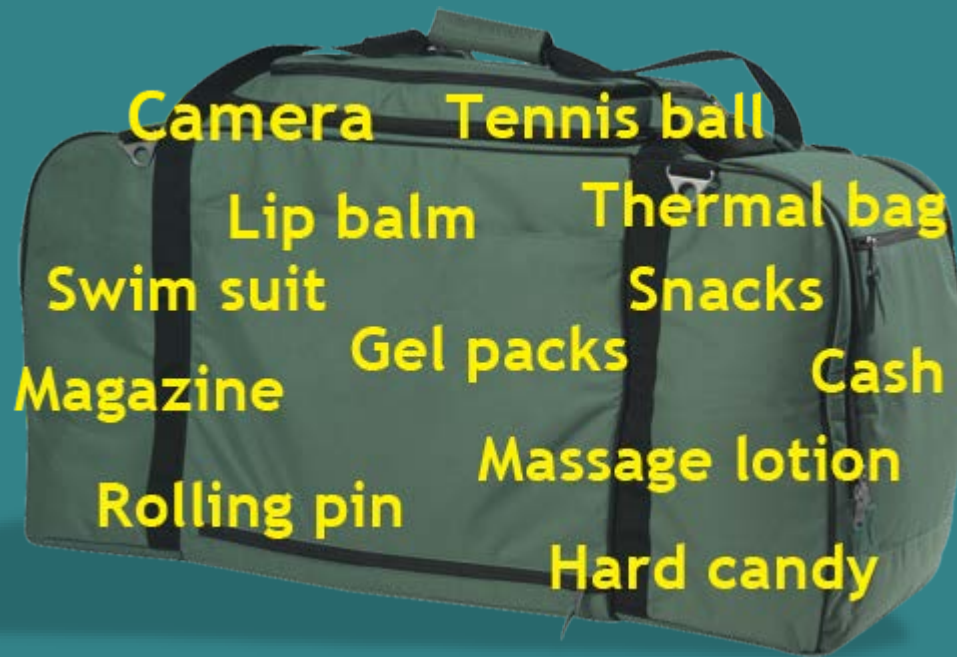
# Your Labour Support Team



Support during labour may help you:

- Cope better with labour pain.
- Use pain medications less often.
- Need less medical interventions.
- Have a shorter labour.
- See labour and birth as a positive experience.

# Labour support bag





# Relaxation, Touch & Massage

Massage may help you:

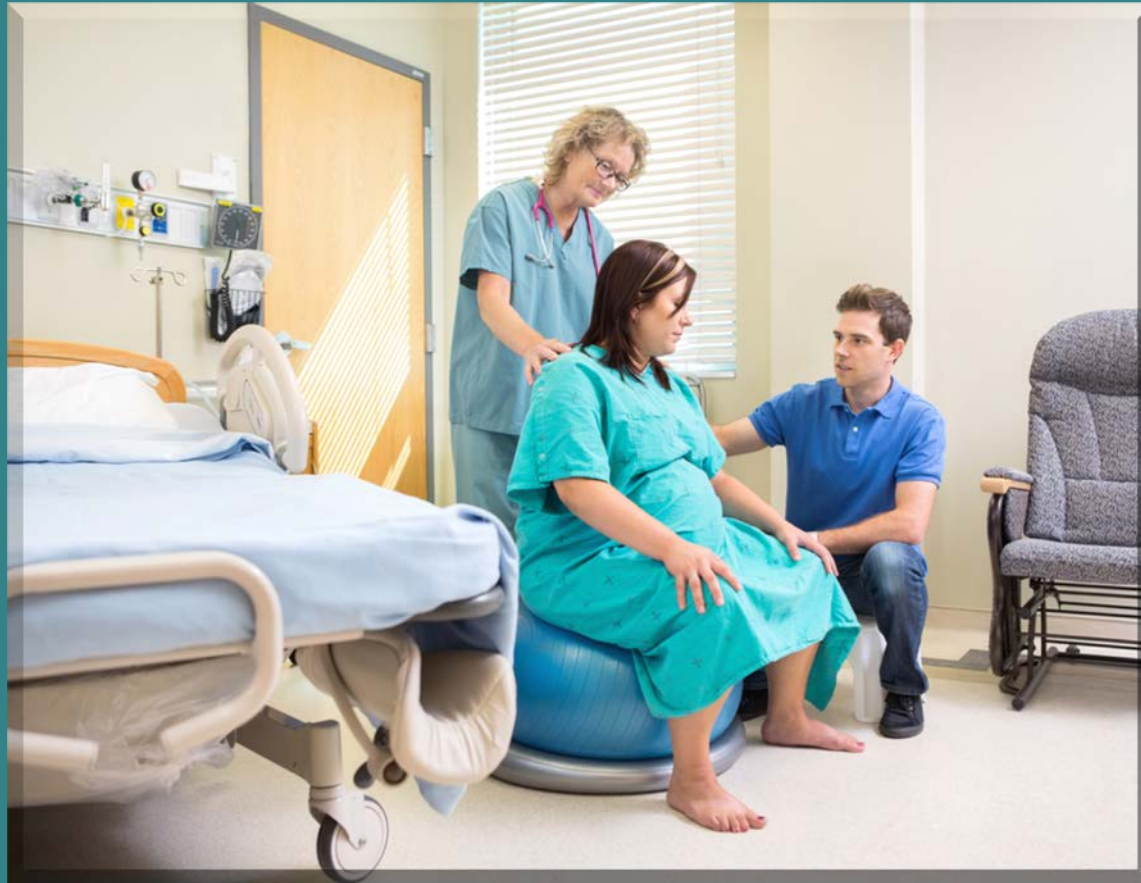
- ↓ muscle tension.
- ↓ pain
- ↓ stress



# Position Changes



# Birthing Ball



# Hydrotherapy

May help to:

- ↑ relaxation
- ↓ muscle tension.
- ↓ pain
- ↓ stress





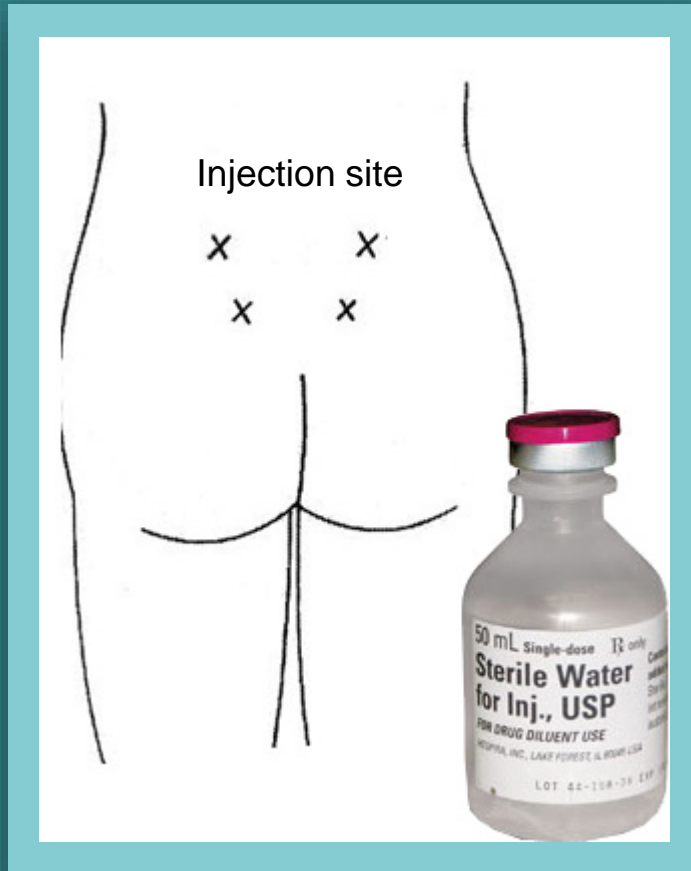
# Relieving Back Labour



# Other suggestions



# Alternative therapies



**Sterile Water Injections**  
(Sterile Water Block)



**TENS**  
(Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation).

# Self-help Strategies

- Focusing attention
- Vocalization
- Imagery and visualization
- Positive affirmations
- Personal coping skills
- Aromatherapy



# Breathing Patterns



# Slow Breathing

- Breathe slowly and rhythmically in through the nose and out through the mouth.

# Fun with Ice



# Light (shallow) Breathing

- Inhale and exhale lightly through your mouth, making a sound on exhalation.



# Variable breathing

- Shallow breathing for two to four breaths and then, after one inhalation, exhale slowly allowing your body to go limp.

# Pushing





# Event Training Schedule

- Establish a timetable
- Vary your training
- Prepare your mind for the race
- Pace yourself
- Take care of yourself
- Have your stuff ready
- Enjoy yourself



# Informed choice

- Do what makes you feel comfortable during labour.
- Ask questions to help you make informed choices.
- Consider writing out your birth preferences to share with your health care provider.
- Consider using a code word to signal you want pain medication.

# Additional Resources

- Health care provider
- Public health unit
- Community health centre
- Local hospital or birth centre
- Certified Doula
- The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists -  
[www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)

The information represents the  
best practice guidelines at the time of publication.  
The content is not officially endorsed by the Government of Ontario.  
Consult your health care provider for information specific to your pregnancy.



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[www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org)

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