

Breathing During Labor

Remember to follow mom's lead in breathing, use in the order and style that works for her. You may come up with your own rhythm...use it! These are just suggestions.

- Cleansing breath: A very deep "belly" breath inhaling with nose, and exhaling with mouth
- Slow Pace: In the nose and out the mouth slowly
- Steady Pace: Out the mouth and in the mouth, a steady pace using different sounds (hee, hee...)
- Varied pace: (hee hee hee hee who...) vary the amount of hees

Breathing During Pushing

- Valsalva: hold breath and bear down
- Spontaneous Down: groaning or making noise as you push
- Pant Blow: used when you need to try and avoid pushing or bearing down
- Laboring Down: allowing time for uterus to move baby down without Mom actively bearing down

Massage

- Hands
- Feet
- Back, shoulder, buttocks
- Scalp

Heat Therapy

You can use a warm, wet towel, washcloth, or heated rice sock to apply heat to the following areas:

- Lower back
- Under abdomen
- Shoulders

Cold Therapy

You can use a washcloth, towel, or cold pack to various areas to help cope with discomfort:

- Lower back
- Perineum after delivery
- Face and neck during labor

Water Therapy

- Shower
- Jacuzzi
- Ice chips/ice water
- Hot fluids
- Popsicle
- Lip balm

Positions for Comfort

Remind mom that any position change may bring on more discomfort for a few contractions as the baby adjusts its position. This is normal. You can request a mat and/or labor ball to be brought into your room. A position may feel good at one point in labor and not another; keep trying until you find something that works.

- Counter Pressure
- Hip Squeeze
- Pelvic Rocking
- Walking
- Knee Press (hands or shoulders)
- Labor Ball (sitting, lying over, against wall)
- Rocking Chair
- Squatting
- Slow Dance (sitting or standing)
- Kneeling over the back of the bed
- Backward straddle position on chair, resting head on back of chair with pillow

Emotional Support

- Direct, loving eye contact
- Don't lose confidence if mom doesn't like a certain touch or is irritable; she needs you
- Gentle reminders/suggestions
- Encourage her
- Be patient with her and the labor process; every labor has its own rhythm
- Be respectful of her need for quiet at times
- Assure her of your presence
- Respond to contractions with compassion

Other Ways to Comfort

- Play music softly (bring your own player)
- Remind her of a focal point to look at during contraction
- Limit visitors during labor and after baby is born; she needs to focus on labor without disruptions and you both need to adjust to your baby once it's born
- Let mom see you love and care for your new baby; seeing you attach to baby enhances moms attachment