

■ Evelyn & Rose Women's Health

Pain Relief Options for Labour

■ Pain in Labour

Labour pain is a natural part of birth, caused by uterine contractions, pressure on the pelvis, and stretching of the cervix and birth canal. Every woman's experience is unique — the goal is to help you feel **safe, supported, and in control**. Pain relief options can be **non-medical** or **medical**, and you can combine several methods throughout labour.

■ Non-Medical (Natural) Pain Relief Options

These techniques help your body's natural coping mechanisms and may reduce the need for medical interventions.

- **Movement and Position Changes:** Walking, rocking, squatting, or being on hands and knees can reduce pain and help labour progress.
- **Warm Water (Hydrotherapy):** Using a warm bath or shower can relax muscles and ease contractions.
- **Massage and Touch:** Partner or midwife massage and counter-pressure reduce tension.
- **Breathing and Relaxation:** Deep, rhythmic breathing and guided relaxation promote calmness.
- **TENS Machine:** Gentle electrical impulses to the lower back help block pain signals.
- **Heat Packs:** Applied to lower back or abdomen to relax muscles.
- **Emotional Support:** Support from your partner, midwife, or doula can reduce anxiety and pain.

■ Medical Pain Relief Options

Medical options can be used alone or alongside non-medical methods, depending on your birth plan.

- **Gas (Nitrous Oxide):** Inhaled through a mouthpiece during contractions; acts quickly and wears off fast.
- **Morphine or Pethidine:** Strong pain relief by injection; may cause drowsiness or nausea.
- **Epidural Analgesia:** Administered by an anaesthetist; provides the most effective pain relief but limits mobility.
- **Spinal Block:** Used for caesarean births; complete pain relief for several hours.
- **Local Anaesthetic:** Numbs the perineal area if stitches or an episiotomy are required.

■ Complementary Therapies (If Available)

Some hospitals and private settings may also offer:

- **Sterile water injections** for back pain
- **Aromatherapy** or **acupuncture**
- **Hypnobirthing** and guided relaxation

■ ■ Choosing What's Right for You

Discuss your preferences early and include them in your birth plan. Stay flexible — labour can change, and so can your needs. Your care team will guide and support your choices safely.

■ Key Takeaway

Every woman's labour is different. What matters most is that you feel **informed, supported, and empowered** — whatever path your birth takes.

■ Evelyn & Rose Women's Health

■ ■ ■ ■ Compassionate, evidence-based care for your pregnancy, birth, and beyond.

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