

***North Carolina Women's Hospital***  
**Strategies for Laboring with Few or No Pain  
Medicines**

Many couples desire to labor and give birth with few or no pain medicines. Here are some helpful hints to consider:

- Before labor, talk with your partner or other support persons about your thoughts and feelings about pain medicines in labor. If you are not in agreement, labor is not the time to work it out.
- Consider working with a doula to help you in labor. The doula will assist your partner or support person to provide extra help in meeting your needs.
- Communicate your wishes to your provider and to the other staff. One way to do this is to write a birth plan or complete the UNC Baby's Birth Day Wishes. Remember that a birth plan is a guide and can be changed.
- Tell the Labor and Delivery staff that you will let them know if and when you want pain medicine.
- Come to the hospital when you feel that your labor is well underway. Before you come you can walk around, drink lots of fluids and use other comfort measures. Even in the earliest stages of labor use your relaxation and breathing techniques.
- Once you get to the hospital stay active by walking around as much as possible. If you are in bed, change positions at least every 30 minutes.
- If you decide you would like some pain medicine ask for a vaginal exam before the nurse gives you the medication. You may discover that you are almost ready to give birth.

**Finally....**

**have confidence in yourself! Labor is powerful and usually painful, but there are resting periods. Take one contraction at a time. Rest and relax between each one. Remember: you have never had this labor with this baby before and there is much to discover. Be kind to yourself!! Focus on the baby you soon will be holding!**

Approved by NC Women's Hospital Patient Education Steering Committee,  
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