

Natural pain management methods: There are also ways to help you cope with labor pain without medication, or in combination with medication:

- **Massage** – Have your partner massage your back or feet.
- **Breathing** – Deep, slow breaths and grunting are two examples of the many different ways to breathe through the pain of a contraction.
- **Visualization** – You may find it helpful to picture yourself somewhere enjoyable, such as on a beach or walking through a forest.
- **Water** – Soak in a tub or take a shower to soothe some tension.

Epidurals: This is the most common type of pain relief used during labor. An epidural numbs only the lower part of your body below your belly button and allows you to be awake and alert throughout labor, as well as to feel pressure. You will be able to push when it's time to give birth to your baby. It can take about 15 minutes for the pain medication to work, and you can continue to receive it as needed. Epidurals are very safe; however, as with all medications and medical procedures, there are some potential side effects to be aware of.

- **Decrease in blood pressure** – The medication may lower your blood pressure, which may slow your baby's heart rate. To make this less likely, you will be given extra fluids through a tube in your arm (IV line) and may need to lie on your side. Sometimes, your physician anesthesiologist will give you a medication to maintain your lower blood pressure.
- **High Epidural-** Sometimes the epidural goes higher than we want. This can make you feel like you can't breathe and it can be scary, however, the anesthesiologist and nurses will stay with you and make sure that you and the baby are getting the oxygen you need until the epidural wears down.
- **Sore back** – Your lower back may be sore where the needle was inserted to deliver the medication. This soreness should last no more than a few days.

- **Headache** – On rare occasions, the needle pierces the covering of the spinal cord, which can cause a headache that may last for a few days if left untreated.
- **Infections:** rare cases of infection can happen, this can be serious, we do everything we can to prevent these.
- **Ineffective:** sometimes an epidural does not work or works only on one side. This is something we can help by placing another epidural or giving more medication. But epidurals are not 100% and not made to get rid of 100% of the pain especially as the baby moves down in the pelvis.
- **Longer pushing:** epidurals do make pushing longer because you are more comfortable. Sometimes, we will let the epidural wear off so you can push faster. This is for your safety and the safety of the baby.
- **Epidurals:** Do not lead to an increase in cesarean sections.

IV pain medications:

These are pain medications are injected through your IV. These medications do go through the placenta and as you get closer to delivery it is not safe to give these to you because they can go to the baby. Common used medications at Adventist Tillamook Medical Center is Fentanyl or Stadol. These medications do not get rid of pain completely, but they can make the pain more tolerable and help you sleep.