

IS AN EPIDURAL MY ONLY OPTION?



67% OF PEOPLE



opt for an epidural to help ease some of the pain of childbirth

EPIDURAL PROS AND CONS

Like any medical procedure, an epidural can have **pros** and **cons** that are smart to consider.

So let's talk information¹, not judgment!

PROS

- ✓ Can provide effective pain relief
- ✓ Easy to access in most hospitals
- ✓ May promote progress in previously slow labors

CONS

- ✗ Restricted movement
- ✗ Disruption of hormones needed for labor
- ✗ Longer pushing stage
- ✗ Concerning changes blood pressure and baby's heart rate
- ✗ Potential challenges with breastfeeding
- ✗ Spinal headache, itching, nausea and vomiting

MANAGING YOUR PAIN IN OTHER WAYS

Here are some less invasive options² for **keeping pain in check**:



Labor support doula



Movement



Alternate positions



Focused breathing



Warm shower or bath



Warm pack, cool compress or icepack on painful areas



Gentle massage

SAVVY PARENT TIPS



Inform your care provider that you want to **delay the epidural and communicate your pain management preferences** with the nursing staff.



If you do opt for an epidural, **talk to your nurses about helping you move and change positions** during labor to keep baby moving.

USE THESE QUESTIONS TO GET THE INFORMATION YOU NEED



- What are the potential **side effects** and **risks** involved?
- What are my pain management **alternatives** in my chosen birth setting?
- What **options** are provided to women laboring without an epidural?
- Do you support using a **doula** to help me manage my pain?

VISIT WWW.LAMAZE.ORG TO LEARN MORE.



1 Grant EN, Tao W, Craig M, McIntire D, Leveno K. Neuraxial analgesia effects on labor progression: facts, fallacies, uncertainties, and the future. BJOG : an international journal of obstetrics and gynaecology. 2015;122(3):288-293. doi:10.1111/1471-0528.12966. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4308552/UpToDate>: Adverse effects of neuraxial analgesia and anesthesia for obstetrics. June 28, 2017 https://www.uptodate.com/contents/adverse-effects-of-neuraxial-analgesia-and-anesthesia-for-obstetrics?source=search_result&search=epidural%20analgesia&selectedTitle=2-150#H1

2 Simkin, P. (2012, April 24). Ten ways to relieve labor pain. [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.lamaze.org/p/bl/et/blogid=3&blogaid=22>