

Interventions During Birth

Birth is an incredible yet sometimes unpredictable experience! During your labour, your midwife will be communicating things to you as they happen. Listed below are a few of things that may be recommended in your labour.

IV Fluids:

Labour can be intense and tiring on your body. It is important to stay well hydrated to keep yourself going in labour.

Sometimes, you aren't able to drink enough to meet what your body needs. If that is the case, we will recommend starting an IV in order to give you some fluids directly.

IV Fluids may be used in your labour if:

- You have been labouring for a long time
- You aren't able to drink water or are very nauseous
- You are bleeding
- Your heart rate or your baby's heart rate is high

External Fetal Monitoring (EFM):

During normal active labour, we listen to your baby's heart rate every 15-30 minutes using a doppler, the same little machine that we use in clinic.

Sometimes, your baby can get stressed by labour and it is important to listen to their heart rate continuously. We do this using External Fetal Monitoring (EFM). This involves one round monitor on your lower tummy to listen to baby and another one a bit higher to monitor your contractions.

The monitors are attached to a machine which tracks your baby's heart rate so that we can see how they are tolerating labour. This is the same device that is used for a Non-Stress Test.

EFM may be used in your labour if:

- We are hearing drops or decelerations in your baby's heart rate
- Oxytocin is being used
- Meconium is present (your baby has had their first poop before being born!)
- You are bleeding
- You've had a previous C-section

Oxytocin:

Oxytocin is the hormone that stimulates your uterus to have contractions. It is the ‘love’ hormone and is released in labour, when we are being intimate and when we are feeling joy.

There is a synthetic form of this hormone that is used in labour to mimic the one our body makes on its own.

If oxytocin is needed in your labour, your midwife will discuss it with you and then call an obstetrician to review your case. Oxytocin is given through an IV.

Oxytocin may be used in your labour if:

- You have been in early labour for a long time
- Your contractions start to get further apart when you are in active labour (sometimes this can happen with an epidural)
- Your contractions are strong and regular but your cervix isn’t dilating
- You are in the second stage pushing, but your baby isn’t getting lower
- You are bleeding after your baby has been born

Epidural:

Epidurals are a form of pain management that takes away the pain of the contractions almost completely. Your plan for pain medication is important to us and we will support your preferences. However, there are some instances where midwife may recommend an epidural during labour.

An epidural may be recommended if:

- You have been labouring for a long time and are exhausted
- You have an urge to push before your cervix is fully dilated
- Your baby isn’t in the best position

Assisted and Operative Deliveries:

Our goal is for you to have an uncomplicated vaginal delivery but sometimes your baby has another idea in mind.

If we have concerns about you, your baby, or how your labour is progressing, we will recommend talking to an obstetrician to review your case.

Depending on the stage of labour you are in, they may recommend an assisted delivery (Vacuum or Forceps) or an operative delivery (C-Section).

An assisted delivery or c-section may be recommended if:

- Your baby's heart rate is abnormal
- Your labour is not progressing/your cervix isn't dilating despite other interventions
- You are having too much bleeding

For more info on these topics, here's some additional reading:

<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/pain-relief-options-labour-and-birth>

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/tn9759>

<https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/birth/delivery/vacuum-and-forceps-assisted-birth/>

<https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/birth/delivery/normal-childbirth/>

<https://www.pregnancyinfo.ca/birth/delivery/caesarean-section/>