



Nitrous Oxide for Labor

Boven Birth Center offers nitrous oxide as an additional comfort option for women during labor.

What is nitrous oxide?

Nitrous oxide for labor is a blend of 50 percent nitrous oxide and 50 percent oxygen that you inhale through a mask. The 50/50 blend used for labor is a milder concentration of that which is widely used in dentist offices and is offered as a comfort option to help patients cope with labor pain.

How does nitrous oxide help during labor?

Nitrous oxide helps lower anxiety and allows patients to relax. It does not take all of the pain away, but women report that the nitrous oxide makes them feel less tense and less aware of pain during contractions allowing them to better cope with labor.

Who will administer the nitrous oxide?

You will hold the mask yourself. Your labor nurse will teach you to breathe into the mask when a contraction is starting and until it goes away. You are in control of how often you breathe in the nitrous oxide. Your nurse will stay with you until you are comfortable using it.

Does nitrous oxide affect my baby?

Based on research, there are no known effects to the baby. In fact, use of nitrous oxide for labor pain has been a common practice in Europe, Canada and Australia for many years.

Does nitrous oxide affect my contractions?

Although you may perceive your contractions differently, nitrous oxide does not affect the strength or frequency of your contractions.

How will I feel when using nitrous oxide?

Peak effect takes 30-60 seconds. Each patient has a different experience when using nitrous oxide, but most feel relaxed. Some women might feel sleepy or light-headed. Any effects are cleared after taking a few breaths without the mask.