



Medical Procedures

Method	How It's Done	Why It's Done/ Benefits	Risks to Mom	Risks to Baby
Induction <i>(Using medication or procedures to start labor)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical dilator (device inserted in cervix and expanded) • Sweeping membranes (provider separates amniotic sac from uterus) • Cervical ripening agents (medicine applied on or near cervix) • Pitocin (medicine added to IV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too far past due date • Water breaks without contractions • Pregnancy has put you or baby at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased chance of cesarean birth • Increased labor discomfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fetal distress
Augmentation <i>(Using medication or procedures to speed up labor)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitocin • Amniotomy (breaking the bag of water) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor slows down • Need for stronger, more frequent contractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't always shorten labor • Infection (with amniotomy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fetal distress
Analgesic <i>(Narcotic pain medication)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurse adds medicine to an IV or injects it into your thigh or hip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be given shortly after requested • Provides fast relief • Doesn't numb muscles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drowsiness, nausea, and itching • May slow breathing • May lower blood pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow breathing • Sleepy and less alert at birth
Epidural <i>(Regional anesthesia that numbs pain in the lower body)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist places a catheter in your lower back that carries medicine to you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, effective pain relief • Chance to rest • Does not affect mental state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering, fever, itching, nausea • Lowered blood pressure • Incomplete pain relief • Other rare risks are listed on consent form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant risks to the baby are known
Second Stage Interventions <i>(Procedures that help baby through birth canal)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Episiotomy (an incision in the perineum) • Vacuum extractor (a suction cup and pump that helps guide the baby out) • Forceps (an instrument shaped like tongs to help guide the baby out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too tired to push • Epidural causes ineffective pushing • Baby needs to be born quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't offer substantial benefit (episiotomy) • Increased pain and infection after birth (episiotomy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary marks/bruising on the baby's face or head (vacuum/forceps)



Understanding Birth

A Comprehensive Guide

Quiz:

1. Why should you create a birth plan?

- A. To outline your birth preferences
- B. To use as a communication tool with your healthcare provider
- C. To help you think about the kind of birth you want
- D. All of the above

2. What acronym should you use to remember what questions to ask if a procedure is suggested?

- A. COAT
- B. SCRAP
- C. BRAIN
- D. BRAT

3. What are the risks of induction?

- A. An increased risk of cesarean birth and fetal distress
- B. Headaches and sleepiness
- C. Nausea and vomiting
- D. None of the above

4. What are the main pain medications used in labor?

- A. Analgesics
- B. Epidural anesthesia
- C. Pitocin
- D. Both A & B

5. What is Pitocin used for?

- A. To induce (start) labor
- B. To slow labor down
- C. To speed up labor
- D. Both A & C

Use your BRAIN

Remember, before you make a decision on a procedure or treatment for you or your baby, think of the acronym BRAIN.

B – Benefits (What are the advantages?)

R – Risks (What are the possible problems?)

A – Alternatives (Do you have other options?)

I – Intuition (How does this make you feel?)

N – No/Not now (What would happen if you said “no” or “not now”?)

Sample Birth Plan

Labor Environment

- Dim Lighting Quiet
- Play music Wear my own clothing
- Aromatherapy scents
- Bring things from home, such as blankets or photos

Pain Relief

Non-Medical Options

- Relaxation Changing positions/
walking
- Visualization Massage
- Fitness ball Breathing
- Tub/shower Hot and cold packs

Medical Options

- Analgesic Epidural anesthesia
- I prefer that pain medication only be offered to me at my request.

Baby Care

- I want to hold my baby skin to skin immediately after birth and breastfeed as soon as possible.
- I am breastfeeding exclusively and don't want my baby to be given pacifiers, bottles, or formula.
- I want to room-in with my baby.