

Maximize the Epidural Experience

how to get the most out of it (medically, emotionally and psychologically)

When to get it:

Rest and stay home, if possible, through early labor.

Aim for active labor (4/5cm) or establish a lower limit for yourself (when contractions are 3 minutes apart for an hour, etc). Use this time to cope by moving around.

Keep a trick or two in your back pocket when you first decide to get it. (shower, hot packs, favorite music and slow-dancing)

Waiting for it to arrive:

(M) Stay focused on getting through each contraction, doubling the effort to cope

(P) Stay present to what she needs as she waits

(P) Help clear the room of personal things (expedites the procedure set up)

During the procedure:

(M) Depend on medical staff for encouragement

(M) Ask for what would help - eye contact, firm hand holding, breathing

(P) Find out how you'll know the procedure is complete

(P) Give mother a quick, loving "see you soon" then grab coat, wallet and phone.

(P) Refresh by: eating real food, stepping outside or stretching, updating family

(P) If present for the procedure: support team can be seated or have a chair nearby.

(P) Maintain eye contact and breathe with her. Embody an anchor in rough waters.

Immediately After:

(M) Whatever you would like! Talk, laugh, cry, sleep, Tinder.

(P) Be close by, listen if she wants to talk

(P) Offer massage or to help her get to sleep.

(P) Bring comfort items to a table she can reach.

Resting:

(M) Bring ear plugs and eye mask, or hide face under a sweater.

(M) Minimize distractions (people, phones, staff) to rest.

(M) Enlist staff help to rotate occasionally. Use peanut ball or pillows between knees.

(P) Keep the lights dim, limit people in the room, bring familiar smells, love on her

Pushing

(M) Consider laboring down to reserve energy

(M) Can ask to have Epidural reduced if you would like to work with sensations.

(M) Be open (ha.) to trying various positions, rest fully in between contractions.

(P) Grab a bite to eat at GO time.

(P) Cool her face, fan her, offer water in between contractions.

(P) Physically support her in whatever pushing position she likes.

* (M) = mother (P) = partner/supporter