Guidelines for Pain Management

Unless medically contraindicated, maternal request is a sufficient medical indication for pain relief during labor. Pain relief options include non-pharmacologic, systemic, and regional analgesia. The choice is dependent on many factors, including patient preference and medical contraindications.

Nonpharmacological
• Breathing techniques, position changes, birthing ball.
• Hydrotherapy, i.e. tub
• Massage
• Hypnobirthing
• For all nonpharmacological methods:
  When: Throughout labor and delivery
  Monitoring*: Intermittent

Systemic
• IV pain medicine. Recommend dosing of Nubain: 5mg IM / 5mg IV
  When: Early labor, most effective in active labor, rarely given if birth imminent
  Monitoring*: Continuous for 30 minutes, then intermittent

• Nitrous oxide – please see guidelines for consent and administration procedures
  When: Women at term in active labor
  Monitoring*: Intermittent

Regional
• Epidural – continuous infusion (per anesthesia)
  When: Varies, often when labor established, delivery not imminent
  Monitoring: Continuous
• Spinal
  When: Delivery likely within 1 hour
  Monitoring: Continuous

References


*Monitoring at the discretion of obstetrician or nurse midwife