Women’s Services

Using hypnosis techniques for labour and birth - the role of your midwife

You have chosen to have your baby using hypnosis relaxation techniques. This leaflet provides some information about the care and support midwives can give you in relation to this.

There are a variety of hypnosis for birth techniques which are designed to help you be more relaxed during labour and birth, this can help to reduce the fear-tension-pain cycle which may occur. Using hypnosis techniques can optimise birth progressing as nature intended. As midwives, we are keen to support you in your wish to use hypnosis, and we would like you to be aware of some considerations we have come across when caring for other women using these techniques.

Pre birth planning

It is helpful for all mothers and midwives to discuss plans for birth in the antenatal period. You can then be assured that your wishes are known and you will be able to discuss any concerns you may have. This will all be clearly documented in your maternity records so that staff are aware of your plans when your labour begins. This discussion should take place with your community midwife at one of your antenatal appointments.

Occasionally some women may opt for a plan of care that is outside our local and national guidelines. If this is the case, the midwife will continue to provide care and support women with their choices. However, she is required to have detailed discussions with the woman, discuss their options and choices, and ensure any potential risks are outlined so that women can make a fully informed decision about their care. This type of discussion is best held in the antenatal period and can be had with the community midwife when plans for birth are discussed.

Contacting the hospital or your midwife when in labour

We ask to speak to you and not to your partner when you contact the hospital. Although you will be already practising your relaxation techniques, speaking to the midwife does not need to disrupt this process. We have found that it is better for us to speak directly to you because it enables us to gather the correct information about your pregnancy, the current signs and symptoms that you are feeling and how the baby is. This ensures we can assess your situation and discuss a plan of care with you personally to make sure that the birth of your baby is as smooth and safe as possible.
Caring for you safely
We know how important it is for you to be cared for in a relaxed and calm environment, and will endeavour to minimise any disruption or disturbance. However, we want to make sure that you and your baby remain safe through the labour, and to do this, we will need to regularly assess you and your baby’s wellbeing and progress through labour. This involves feeling your abdomen on a regular basis to check the position and descent of the baby and assess the length and strength of the surges. We will also need to monitor your temperature, pulse, blood pressure and your baby’s heart rate. We will try to carry this out as unobtrusively as possible. By monitoring these observations regularly during the labour we can be aware of any changes occurring and can ensure we provide the optimum care for you and your baby.

If things change or special circumstances arise
If special circumstances arise, midwifery or medical staff will need to inform you of the concerns they have and discuss options of care with you. We can do this more safely, quickly and effectively if we can communicate directly with you and your partner. This is so that both you and the staff are fully aware of the situation and any implications it has for you and your baby. We appreciate that this may mean you have a period of time when your relaxed, hypnotic state is reduced, but we are aware that you will have some techniques you can use to be able to return to a relaxed state when left alone, and if the circumstances allow, we will facilitate this happening for you.

Consent
We are aware that your birth partner plays an integral part in supporting you through this process and we will ensure they are supported by the midwife to do that. However, we need to let you know that, although they are encouraged to act as your advocate, they are not legally allowed to consent to medical procedures, or to decline a recommended intervention, on your behalf. This means that if an intervention or operative procedure should become necessary, you will need to give verbal or written consent, or decline it, yourself.

Midwives duty of care
Midwives work guided by ‘rules’ and a midwives code from their professional organisation, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (www.nmc-uk.org) by which they must abide. Key points from this are that care of you is their first concern; and that they must listen to you and respond to your preferences and recognise the contribution you make to your own care and well being. They will also respect and support your right to accept or decline treatment. They have a duty to act as your advocate and uphold your rights to be fully involved in decisions about your care. They are also required to keep clear and accurate records of discussions.

We hope you have found this information useful, and look forward to supporting you with your birthing. We are happy to answer any questions you may have and discuss your wishes with you.
If you would like further discussions about your choices you can speak to your community midwife, or contact a Supervisor of Midwives via Addenbrookes switchboard on 01223 245151.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

Document history
Authors Philippa Cowan
Department Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ www.cuh.org.uk
Contact number 01223 245151
Publish/Review date August 2015/August 2018
File name PIN3314_hypnosis_techniques.doc
Version number/Ref 2/PIN3314