

Positions and tools for birth

There are a variety of tools and positions that can be used to help progress labour and also help to improve your birth experience.

The birth environment

It is important that you are comfortable in your birth environment. Music, dim lighting and aromatherapy can help you to keep calm and relaxed.

To play the music of your choice you will need to bring your own device and speaker.

If you wish to bring your own oils and electric oil burner please check with your midwife that they are safe. Battery operated candles can enhance the environment, please note naked flames are not safe to use in the hospital environment.

Blue Mountains Hospital provides blue tooth speakers for your choice of music and oil burners for aromatherapy.

It is also important to talk to your support people about the best way they can help you in labour. It can be useful to discuss a birth plan with your support people.

Standing

Standing or leaning forwards helps your baby to move down the birth canal by using gravity, it can make contractions easier to cope with and can shorten labour. This can be a good position if you have back ache, as you are taking the pressure off your tailbone. You can be supported by your partner or support person (or even the furniture).

Squatting

Squatting increases the shape and size of your pelvis; it can reduce the length of labour; can reduce the length of the pushing stage; reduces instrumental delivery rates and also helps to utilise gravity to bring your baby down.

Kneeling/all-fours positions

Kneeling and all-fours positions has similar benefits to standing and is useful if your legs are getting tired. This position allows for rocking, allows access for massage and helps relieve back pain.

Birth Ball

A birth ball allows you to move, rock or bounce with contractions. This helps to open the pelvis, allows you to lean forward against your partner or furniture and supports you in a squat like position without tiring.

Rebozo

A rebozo is a long shawl or piece of fabric that can be tied at your waist to help with hip pain or be tied in a way to help lift your abdomen. The rebozo can be looped around your hips and gently tugged to help create a rocking motion, which helps to bring your baby into a good position. You will need to bring this with you.

Birth stool

Sitting on a birth stool, toilet or chair with your legs parted, is a position that opens the pelvis and allows you to benefit from gravity. You can be in this position and lean forward with support from your partner or support person.

Water immersion and water birth

Water immersion is excellent pain relief in labour, it allows freedom of movement and is very relaxing. Being in the bath helps to support you to hold positions that may otherwise have been tiring. Water birth is an option at both Nepean and Blue Mountains Hospitals. Please speak with your midwife or doctor to find out if this option is suitable for you.

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