



Nitrous Oxide Patient Information Sheet

What is Nitrous Oxide and how is it used in labor? Nitrous oxide use for labor pain is a mixture of 50% nitrous gas and 50% oxygen that is inhaled through a mask that a woman holds and self-administers. It may be used as a comfort measure during labor.

How does Nitrous Oxide work? Nitrous oxide reduces pain and anxiety. You hold your own mask, so you decide when to use it and how much you need. The best effect happens when the patient starts to breathe in the gas mixture for about 30 seconds before a contraction begins, allowing for the pain relief to occur when the contraction reaches its peak. You can put the mask down between contractions and use it on and off as you choose.

How much does Nitrous Oxide help with labor pain? How well nitrous oxide works is different for every woman. It may help with coping with contractions, lowering anxiety, and producing pain relief.

How will I feel while I'm using Nitrous Oxide? You may feel drowsy, lightheaded, or nauseated while you are using nitrous oxide. These are common side effects that go away quickly when you stop breathing the gas.

Can using Nitrous Oxide affect my baby? No, there are no documented effects on the fetus or baby.

Will Nitrous Oxide affect my labor progress? No, nitrous oxide does not have any effect on your uterus (womb) or contractions. It may assist with labor progress through relaxation and calming effects.

Can I be out of bed and use Nitrous Oxide? Yes. As long as you are steady on your feet, you may be up and about in your room with the assistance of the nursing staff. You can stand at the bedside, sit on the birthing ball, or use with hydrotherapy.

Must I choose between either using Nitrous Oxide or having an epidural? No. Some women may use nitrous oxide before they have an epidural placed. Usually the epidural and nitrous oxide are not used at the same time. You may choose to use nitrous oxide first and then move to a different type of pain relief later in labor. In general patients, must wait 30 minutes after using nitrous oxide before getting an epidural.

Are there any reasons I could not use Nitrous Oxide? You cannot use nitrous oxide if you:

- Cannot hold your own facemask
- Have pernicious anemia (a vitamin B12 deficiency) or take vitamin B12 supplements
- Have had opioids within **2 hours prior** to implementation of nitrous oxide administration, or have taken methadone, buprenorphine (e.g. Subutex), illegal drugs, narcotics or sedatives within the last 5 days.



Informed Consent for Self-Administration of Nitrous Oxide during Labor and Immediate Postpartum Period

1. Nitrous Oxide (50%) and Oxygen (50%) (Defined below as “Nitrous Oxide”) is self-administered by facemask for pain management during labor and/or birth and during the immediate post-birth (postpartum) period.
 - a. The **purpose** of Nitrous Oxide is pain management, reduction of anxiety and reduction in the awareness of pain.
 - b. The **alternatives** to Nitrous Oxide include, but are not limited to; no pain management, non-medicinal techniques such as breathing, birthing ball, hydrotherapy, IV pain medication and / or epidural anesthesia.
 - c. The potential **benefits** of Nitrous Oxide include decreased pain, anxiety and a feeling of well-being.
 - d. The potential **risks and side effects** of Nitrous Oxide are lack of complete pain relief, nausea, light-headedness and falling. There are no known associated risks to the baby.

2. I agree to self-administer Nitrous Oxide (hold the mask to my face on my own) as needed and only for the reasons indicated above and will not allow anyone else to hold the mask to my face. I understand the Nitrous Oxide is for my use only. If anyone else is observed attempting to use the Nitrous Oxide, it will be removed and is no longer available for my use.

3. My signature below confirms that I have not used any illegal drugs, narcotics or sedatives within the last two hours.

I have read and understand this consent. I have been provided with education and have had the opportunity to have all questions about Nitrous Oxide therapy answered.

Date: _____ Time: _____ Patient: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Witness: _____

PATIENT/LABEL