

# Medicines to Increase Comfort After a Vaginal Birth

## General Information

Although medicine will not take away all of your pain after a vaginal birth, your health care team's goal is to keep you as comfortable as possible. The medicines listed here may be able to help increase your comfort. Your nurse will help you decide which options are best for you.

Brand names and ingredients can change. Use the generic name (before the brand name in parentheses) as the key for using these medicines. If you have questions or concerns, ask your pharmacist.

## Integrative Medicine

Ask your nurse or health care provider about integrative comfort cares such as:

- aromatherapy
- massage
- guided imagery
- acupuncture
- acupressure.

## For Mild to Moderate Discomfort

**Ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®)**  
(Take no more than 2,400 milligrams in dose in 24 hours.)

- **What it is:** a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory that reduces swelling and pain. It can be helpful to relieve the uterine cramping you may have after birth.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** nausea, stomach pain, dizziness, headache or rash.

**Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)**  
(Take no more than 4,000 milligrams in dose in 24 hours.)

- **What it is:** an analgesic used to treat mild pain. It also reduces fever.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** nausea, vomiting, headache or insomnia.

**Witch hazel (Tucks®)**

- **What it is:** a moistened medicated pad used to help relieve soreness and swelling in the perineal area.
- **How it is given:** gently wipe the pad over the affected area. You may also place the pad over the perineal area and keep it in place with a maxi pad.
- **Possible side effects:** redness, swelling, burning, itching or dry skin. Tell your doctor if you have any of these side effects.

**Dibucaine topical ointment 1% (Hemorrhoidal & Topical Analgesic or Nupercainal®)**

- **What it is:** a numbing ointment to relieve hemorrhoid pain or pain in the perineal area.
- **How it is given:** apply to the affected area.
- **Possible side effects:** pain, swelling or redness. Tell your doctor if you have any of these side effects.

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## For Itching

### ❑ Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®)

- **What it is:** an antihistamine to relieve severe itching.
- **How it is given:** by intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm or by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** sleepiness, feeling sweaty or clammy, upset stomach, vomiting, dizziness, dry mouth or headache.

### ❑ Nalbuphine hydrochloride (Nubain®)

- **What it is:** a medicine to relieve itching if you had an epidural.
- **How it is given:** by intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm.
- **Possible side effects:** sleepiness, feeling sweaty or clammy, upset stomach, vomiting, dizziness, dry mouth or headache.

## For Gas or Acid Relief

### ❑ Aluminum hydroxide and magnesium hydroxide (Maalox Plus®)

- **What it is:** a medicine to relieve symptoms of acid indigestion, heartburn, gas and sour stomach.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (liquid).
- **Possible side effects:** constipation, diarrhea, increased thirst or stomach cramps.

### ❑ Simethicone (Mylanta® Gas Maximum Strength Chewable Tablets)

- **What it is:** a medicine to relieve painful pressure caused by extra gas.
- **How it is given:** by mouth.
- **Possible side effects:** serious side effects are not expected.

## For Constipation

### ❑ Docusate (Colace®)

- **What it is:** a laxative to relieve constipation.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (pill).
- **Possible side effects:** stomach cramps, nausea, diarrhea, bitter taste and or throat irritation.

### ❑ Polyethylene glycol 3350 (MiraLAX®)

- **What it is:** a laxative to relieve constipation.
- **How it is given:** by mouth.
- **Possible side effects:** diarrhea, gas, nausea, stomach cramps or swollen belly.

### ❑ Magnesium hydroxide (Milk of Magnesia®)

- **What it is:** a laxative to relieve constipation.
- **How it is given:** by mouth (liquid).
- **Possible side effects:** diarrhea and upset stomach.

### ❑ Bisacodyl (Dulcolax®)

- **What it is:** a laxative to treat constipation.
- **How it is given:** suppository inserted into the rectum.
- **Possible side effects:** dizziness, upset stomach or diarrhea.