

# Pain Relief in Labour: Video transcript

## Pain Relief Options – Warm Bath

Hello. My name is Kate and I am a midwife with the Midwifery Group Practice based at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Another technique women use to manage their labour is sitting in a warm bath.

Some women may also find a hot shower very useful.

I will now focus on using a warm bath during labour but not cover birthing in water.

Research has shown that sitting in water during labour reduces the woman's pain and the need for pain relieving drugs as well as increasing satisfaction with the experience.

It may even shorten the length of labour.

Common questions raised about sitting in a warm bath, also known as water immersion, during labour are:

### **Is there an increased risk of infection to the labouring woman or the baby?**

The simple answer is 'No.'

Research has shown that as long as the Women's and Children's Hospital continues to follow its strict guidelines about cleaning the birthing bath and water management during the labour there is no increased risk.

### **Will water immersion affect the contractions?**

Once again the simple answer is 'No.'

Research shows that there is no difference in the need for drugs to help labour progress between women who are in and out of water.

### **Can anybody use water immersion during labour?**

The research has shown water immersion is safe in women who are at low risk of having a complication.

The Women's and Children's Hospital policy therefore is that the following conditions must be met for water immersion to be safe.

- The pregnancy has been uncomplicated and is between 37 and 42 weeks.
- There is only one baby to be born
- The labouring woman is not overweight with a Body Mass Index of less than 35
- The labouring woman has not used any fentanyl or had a spinal or epidural in her back
- There is no medical reason that would stop the labouring woman or the baby from safely being in the water
- If the labouring woman and baby can both be safely monitored whilst in the water.
- And finally, if there is an appropriately trained midwife who can manage a labour in water.

### **How can a warm bath during labour be arranged?**

Before using a warm bath a brochure discussing the benefits and risks of being in water must be read, discussed with your midwife or doctor and a consent form signed.

Any woman who would like to have a warm bath during labour should make her wishes known as soon as she presents to hospital in labour or when the induction of labour is booked as not every room has a bath.

Every effort will be made to accommodate a person's wishes but no guarantee can be made of an appropriate room or appropriately trained midwife being available when desired.

The Women's and Children's Hospital Patient Information Brochure on this topic is available under the 'Further Recommended Information' section.