

Will Belly Beginnings classes help me even though I'm planning to have an epidural?

The answer is YES. The purpose of classes is to give couples *all* of the information so that they can make a decision that is right for them. Armed with *knowledge* of benefits, risks, side effects, alternatives, and research, you will be able to make an informed decision during your birth. You won't have time during your labor and birth to soak in the amount of knowledge you will gain through our 12 week classes.

By taking a Belly Beginnings series of classes, you will learn how to:
-cope with pain before the epidural or if the epidural does not work for you
-learn how to use pain medication wisely to decrease the risks
-weigh benefits and the risks in order to make an informed decision

DID YOU KNOW...

- Did you know that an induced labor increases your chance for a cesarean section by 60-70%?
- Did you know that you will probably need to hold perfectly still while having painful contractions so that the anesthesiologist can administer the epidural correctly?
- Did you know that the anesthesiologist must insert the needle into a space that is about the size of the space between 2-ply tissue paper?
- Did you know that if he goes too far, you can have severe respiratory depression, but if he doesn't go far enough you will not receive pain relief?
- Did you know that many women complain that the epidural "did not work for them" - only took on one side, windows of pain, not soon enough, too late, wears off, etc?
- Did you know that most women ask for the epidural during transition which only lasts about 30 minutes?
- Did you know that epidurals take 20-30 minutes to be effective?
- Did you know that some labors are so fast that there isn't time to administer an epidural?
- Did you know that some women say the epidural takes away the pain, but not the pressure which many find is the hardest part?
- Did you know that a laboring woman produces 40 times the endorphins found in a non-laboring person and that these endorphins help cope with pain?
- Did you know that those endorphins are not produced when pain medication inhibits the pain response cycle? This can cause a harder recovery or if the epidural were to wear off, the discomfort would seem much more intense.
- Did you know that an epidural can slow labor down significantly?
- Did you know that an epidural also requires an IV, constant electronic fetal monitoring, frequent blood pressure and blood oxygen level checks, and a catheter as well as often requiring Pitocin?
- Did you know that an epidural increases your chances that you will need suction or forceps to "pull" the baby out?
- Did you know that an unmedicated baby can crawl from his mother's stomach to her nipple, but a medicated baby cannot?

When used wisely and at an optimal time, an epidural can give a laboring woman much needed relief and sleep; but if you are not prepared for some of the risks, you may end up wishing you had known a little more.