

# Patient-Controlled Nitrous Oxide for Managing Pain During Labor

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## **What is patient-controlled pain management?**

Patient-controlled pain management is self-administered nitrous oxide that allows you to safely control your own pain relief. It has been used as a pain management option for over 100 years in the United Kingdom. Nitrous oxide is a mix of half (50%) nitrous and half (50%) oxygen. A specially designed on-demand valve allows you to self-administer the Nitrous Oxide through a mask. The mask will only deliver the medical gases when you breathe in and only when you need it.

## **What should I expect?**

Nitrous oxide takes effect in seconds and offers fast relief of pain and anxiety without any needles, pills or long lasting effects.

You control when to use it and for how long. It will allow you to recognize and respond to your pain and discomfort on your own terms.

## **How do I use the mask?**

You will breathe in and out into the mask. You will hold and control the mask yourself. You can pull the mask away from your face when you no longer need it. It will take a couple of breaths of room air for nitrous oxide to leave your system.

## **Common Questions**

### **What is it?**

A mixture of 50% nitrous and 50% oxygen.

### **How does it work?**

The machine handles the mixing to make sure a perfect 50/50 blend is given with each breath. Breathing the nitrous oxide in and out will help relieve the pain and anxiety.

**Does it have side effects?**

Some people report nausea, but taking a few deep breaths without the mask to your mouth will eliminate the nausea.

**Can I move around and get in and out of bed?**

Yes—you are able to change positions and your nurse will help you when walking in the room.

**Do I have to breathe nitrous oxide during my whole labor?**

No—you just take breaths from the system as you need it for pain and anxiety relief.

**Is there anything special I need to do in preparation to use nitrous oxide?**

Yes - it is required that all people who use nitrous oxide, sign a Behavioral Agreement Form, given to you by your provider or nurse.

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