



Breathing for labour...

- Learning to breathe in a calm rhythmic manner may help you to cope with labour by promoting relaxation and providing you with a positive focus for your attention.
- Slow deep breathing may be used during contractions as long as it is effective for you.
- To ensure that you are breathing deeply, place your hands over your ribs just above your waist...you should feel them expand as you breathe in. Adults normally breathe at a rate of 12-18 breaths per minute; your goal should be to slow your breathing to half your normal rate.
- Practice breathing in a comfortable position...close your eyes...breathe slowly in through your nose counting slowly to five. Breathe deeply... but it should also be easy and relaxed. Breathe slowly out through your nose to the count of five, let your self become more and more relaxed with each breath out.
- Imagine that the breath is sweeping over your body like a gentle wave, from the tip of your toes to the top of your head. Feel the tension as it slips away with the wave as it falls again.
- Try to breathe in harmony with the contractions.
- If the contractions are becoming more intense and slow deep breathing is not effective anymore try using faster lighter breathing.

- Place your hand on your upper chest...a light rapid movement should be felt.
- You may feel the need to breathe more quickly at the peak of a contraction, and then slow down as it eases.
- Be sure to adjust the depth of your breathing to the speed. If you breathe quickly, then breathe lightly...if you breathe more slowly, then take deep breaths.
- If you feel tingling in your fingers, feet and around your mouth, dizziness and a spaced out feeling you are hyperventilating...if this should occur breathe into tightly cupped hands or hold your breath for a few seconds.
- You may feel the urge to push before your cervix has opened fully. You can control this urge by blowing rapidly and forcefully, as if you were blowing out birthday candles one at a time. (Inhale-blow, inhale-blow...)
- When the cervix is fully opened and you feel the urge to push, listen to the messages your body is sending you. Push only when you feel the urge to do so. Hold your breath briefly if you need to, or let your air out with a sustained groan if that works better for you.
- Relax and breathe slowly between contractions
- Remember that breathing calmly and rhythmically is more important than the type of breathing you use.

