Common Birth Interventions and your options for using them

At the hospital **you have the right to know** all the pros and cons of each intervention offered to you. If something is not medically needed, **you can say no.**

### Hospital Gowns

**Why:** Hospital gowns help staff get to your body easily. This helps them care for you.

**Pros:** It’s easy to get a new gown if you need one.

**Cons:** They’re one-size-fits-all. They may not fit the way you like.

### Vaginal Exams

**Why:** Vaginal exams are done mainly to see changes in your cervix and see the position of the baby. In most hospitals they happen every 4 hours.

**Pros:** They can help you know where you are in your labor.

**Cons:** They can slow labor down and make you worry. You may also be more likely to get an infection.

### IV

**Why:** An IV helps keep you hydrated and makes it simpler for the staff to give you medicine.

**Pros:** It keeps you hydrated. If you want an epidural or Pitocin, you have to have an IV.

**Cons:** It can be painful and make it hard to move around.

Yes, I want one!

No, I’d rather wear my own clothes.

I’d rather wear nothing!

Yes, even if I don’t have an epidural.

Yes, because I want an epidural.

I would like to be checked regularly.

I might say no, but please ask me.

No, unless it’s medically necessary.
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Epidurals

**Why:** An epidural is medicine to help with pain. It is a needle put into your spine.

**Pros:** It helps with pain.

**Cons:** It can slow labor and make it hard to get the baby into the right position. You are more likely to have a C-section and need Pitocin if you have an epidural.

Induction

**Why:** Your doctor may want to give you Pitocin or break your water to help get labor going.

**Pros:** If you are 41 or 42 weeks pregnant this may be needed.

**Cons:** Inducing too early can lead to problems.

Electronic Fetal Monitoring (EFM)

**Why:** The EFM is a machine that listens to your baby’s heartbeat.

**Pros:** If there is a problem, the staff will know and can help.

**Cons:** It makes it hard for you to move.

I want to labor without medicine.  
I will ask for it during labor if I decide I want it.

Yes, I want medical pain relief.

Yes, I want to request an induction.

No, unless I am given a medical reason to.

Yes, I would like to have this monitoring during my labor.

No, I would like to use other ways to monitor my baby.