

Pitocin

(continued from opposite side)

Less common but serious reactions include uterine tears, severe muscle spasms of the uterus, distress and trauma, amniotic fluid, fetal cells, baby's hair, or other debris enter the mother's circulation, causing heart and lung to collapse, cervical and vaginal lacerations and severe bleeding after the baby is born

VBAC (Vaginal Birth After C-Section)

What is it? Why is it used?

Mother delivers baby vaginally after having had a previous C-Section.

What does it do?

It allows the mom to labor and deliver baby vaginally after a previous C-Section. Mom has the right to choose VBAC instead of repeat C-Section..

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Mother needs to ask for her medical records to check for the type of uterine incision to confirm whether single or double stitches were used to close previous C-Section. VBAC with single stitch closure slightly increases risk of uterine rupture.
- Some risk of retained or abnormally adhered placenta if placenta grew over previous scar.
- Important: The risks from a VBAC are much LESS than the risks of another C-Section

Source: <http://www.birthingnaturally.net/birthplan/informedc.html>

- (1) Ltr from Searle 8/2000 ; FDA
- (2) Healthwise-Kaiser March 08:Goer, H, "Thinking Woman's Guide to Better Birth"
- (3) FDA 1975 ,Cochrane Review, Anim-Somuah, M et al Aug. 2005 update: American Journal of OB/GYN 1993,169
- (4) p851-858: Int'l Anesthesia /clin. 1990-28(I):11-16 "Managing complications of Epidural Analgesia.
- (5) Cochrane Review, Luckas Brickr July 1, 2000
- (6) Rxlist March 2008 , FDA Adverse Reactions site:FDA.gov
- (7) JAMA study May 4, 2005
- (8) ACOG , VBAC guidelines Childbirth.org 1998
- (9) Goer, H, Thinking Woman's Guide to Better Birth pg 92
- (10) American Family Physician May 1, 1999 , Sutter Health (Health Wise)

Alameda County
Public Health
Commission

Interventions and Drugs Used in Labor and Delivery



Cervidil (also called Dinoprostone Vaginal Insert)

What is it? Why is it used?

Vaginal insert , similar to a tampon. Given to women during labor to soften the cervix and induce contractions.

What does it do?

Used to "ripen", or thin out the cervix when it is agreed that your baby is safer to be born than to remain in the uterus. Cervidil is the first step in a two-part induction process when the cervix is not ready to respond to contractions. Cervidil may increase the contractions when no other labor stimulation agent has been used. Cervidil allows the mother to use the medication for the prescribed amount of time and then remove it. In some cases a mother may be able to go home after administration to wait for labor to start. The effects of Cervidil can be stopped by removing the "tampon".

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Cervidil inserts increase the risk for infection. This risk is further increased if the bag of waters is broken and many health care providers will not use it in such a case.
- Use of Cervidil requires continuous monitoring of the baby's heart rate, which decreases mobility.
- Common side effects include irregular heartbeat of the baby, cramps, nausea and headache.
- Serious side effects include difficulty breathing and obstructions of the airways.

Cytotec

(also called Misoprostol or Miso)

What is it? Why is it used?

Pregnant women who are overdue by 1 ½ weeks are given Cytotec to induce labor and soften the

cervix .

What does it do?

Cytotec is a tablet that is inserted in the vagina. It softens the cervix and induces contractions. Once inserted it cannot be removed., nor its effects stopped. The baby's heart rate, the mother's contractions and her other vital signs (heart rate and blood pressure) must be continuously monitored.

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Cytotec has been known to cause tears in the uterus, and cause the uterus to contract too fast, or too many times in a short period of time and cause the baby's heart to beat too fast, or too slow.
- It should never be used if you have had a prior C-section.
- Serious reactions include miscarriage and fetal malformation. In rare cases it has been known to cause cardiac arrest, life-threatening respiratory distress, stop the blood flow to the heart. and irregular heartbeat.
- Cytotec can also cause amniotic fluid, fetal cells, hair, or other debris to enter the mother's circulation, causing heart and lung collapse.
- Cytotec is in the FDA pregnancy category X, meaning it is known to be harmful to an unborn baby. Death of mother and baby have been reported.
- Adequate data on the risks and benefits of the drug for use in labor has not been collected.

C-Section

What is it? Why is it used?

Elective C Sections are at the request of the mother or suggested by the doctor for non-emergency, non-medical reasons. Emergency

C-Section

(Continued from opposite page)

C-Sections are indicated when mother and/or baby are in distress during labor or high risk due to stools from the baby in the fluid, blood pressure abnormalities, and tears in the uterus.

What does it do?

A C-section is a major abdominal surgery performed in a hospital operating room. Incisions are made into the abdomen and uterus. Baby is then lifted out.

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Studies show there is a two to three time greater chance of maternal death with a C-section and this risk rises with each subsequent cesarean.
- Scarring from C-sections can cause long-term risk of bowel obstructions, as much as 20 years post surgery.
- C-Sections are associated with higher stillborn rates in subsequent birth, inability to conceive in the future, higher rates of severe bleeding, deep wounds to the baby and respiratory disease. There is also some risk of pelvic nerve injury, and removal of the uterus..
- C-Sections often require a longer hospital stay and a significantly longer recovery.

Epidural

What is it? Why is it used?

Epidurals are used during labor and delivery to decrease the pain associated with childbirth.

What does it do?

An epidural relaxes the pelvic muscles and the nerves are bathed in the local anesthetic

medication, which causes insensitivity to pain. You will still feel the pressure of the contractions and the urge to push. A needle is placed between the vertebrae (in your spine) into a space called an epidural space. Medication is then placed into this space. A small tube is then threaded through the needle into the space and the needle withdrawn. The tube is left in place and taped so that it does not move. You can then be given a continuous small amount of medication or be given an extra dose when you begin to have pain.

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Epidurals can cause a drop in blood pressure and in rare cases an allergic reaction to the medication.
- Occasionally, labor can be slowed down.
- Use of an epidural is associated with increased C-section rate and the baby's heart beating to fast or to slow.
- The drugs used to decrease pain can affect the mother and baby's breastfeeding and alertness.
- Fever
- Many times causes labor to last longer
- May cause need for a tube to be inserted so the mom can urinate.
- Need for continuous electronic fetal monitoring.

Episiotomy

What is it? Why is it used?

A surgical cut used during labor and delivery when the baby's heart beat is to fast or to slow and there is a medical necessity to birth the baby faster.

What does it do?

A surgical cut that is made to the skin at the base of the vagina during the pushing stage of labor. There are two main types of cuts. A midline episiotomy is cut straight down towards the anus. A medio-lateral is cut to the side.

An episiotomy may shorten pushing by 5 to 15 minutes allowing for the baby to be born faster.

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Episiotomies significantly cause increased pain during recovery.
- The average length of healing time for an episiotomy is 1-2 months.
- Episiotomies increase the incidence of deep tears into the rectum.
- There is an increased risk for infection and more bleeding when the skin is cut.

Internal Fetal Monitoring

What is it? Why is it used?

During labor most women are monitored w/ external monitoring that will record the baby's heart rate and mother's contractions. More exact information may be needed when certain high risk situations occur, such as elevated blood pressure, diabetes or if there has been periods when the baby's heart rate has fallen very low

What does it do?

An electrode (small wire) is placed on the baby's scalp. It is called a fetal scalp electrode (FSE). Often, another monitor is inserted into the uterus. Both monitors are placed through your vagina. After this you will not be able to walk around, sit or shower/bathe.

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- The presence of a placenta before the baby's head which prevent placement of monitor.
- If the cervix is more than 9 centimeters dilated it may be more difficult to place the internal uterine monitor.
- Some risk of infection.

Adverse conditions: Placenta separation due to improper placement. This might result in your baby's heartbeat changing or vaginal bleeding.

However both are limited and generally there are no long-term consequences.

Pitocin

What is it? Why is it used?

Used when a doctor deems it necessary to induce labor or augment labor. Administered by Intravenous (IV) drip in arm, it is given to women whose labor seems to be slowing to increase contractions and bring about birth.

What does it do?

A synthetic version of a natural hormone that causes the uterus to contract and used to induce labor, strengthen labor contractions during childbirth, control bleeding after childbirth, or to induce an abortion. For labor should only be administered in an IV with fetal monitoring. After childbirth, it can be administered as an injection into a muscle or intravenously to control bleeding. It should be administered in a clinical setting where a healthcare provider can monitor uterine contractions and other vital signs (blood pressure, heart rates) and where an emergency situation can be handled properly. Speeds up or augments labor contractions. Increases strength and length of contractions

Contraindications or Possible Side Effects

- Pitocin should not be used in elective labor induction (induction without medical indications) because of inadequate data to evaluate benefit versus risk.
- Common reactions to oxytocin include nausea, vomiting and increased tension of the uterine muscles. Allergic reaction can cause shortness of breath, closing of the throat and hives.
- Difficulty breathing or urinating has been reported, as has excessive vaginal bleeding and seizures.

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