

NO PAIN no gain, is the most believed human philosophy especially in the Indian context, more so when it comes to giving birth to a baby. That's why even today, 150 years after its first use by Queen Victoria, Labor Analgesia is heard by very few here. Labour means hard work; the process of delivery of a baby is no doubt a real hardship which results into a beautiful gift, but only after shedding tons of tears. What if we can get rid of these tears and make this whole process a wonderful experience?

There are many ways to relieve pain related to labour. Specially, the pain killer injections, acupuncture therapies, Tens, breathing gases, hydrotherapy etc but the method which has proved superior today, to all of these, all over the world is Epidural Analgesia. It has been in use for more than 30 years but unfortunately we are less aware of it. So what is it?

When the uterus starts contracting, its mouth starts opening and the pain commences. It is this time when the expecting mother should immediately see her doctor. After this, even if the pain is relieved the process of delivery continues (against the myth that the uterus continues to contract only in the presence of pain). The nerves which carry these sensations from uterus and the birth canal, pass through a space close to our spinal cord called Epidural space. A small dose of specific medicine instilled in this space, at an appropriate time, in appropriate quantities produces pain relief, known as Epidural analgesia. The woman can walk, talk, eat, listen to music, watch TV and enjoy while waiting to be a mother.

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This method of relieving pain has proved to be a blessing for women with high blood pressure, heart disease etc. Since this procedure can be performed by a trained and a qualified anesthetist only, the anesthetist has to ensure that she remains readily available all round the clock to perpetually monitor the process of monitoring the baby and the mother. This does not really cost much but

BIRTH WITH A SMILE

necessarily warrants for a desire of a pain free, superstition free and a happy and healthy life. So, All the *Dada-Dadis*, *Nana-Nanis*, and *Mummy-Daddies*, let's make the wonderful event of birth of a child a pleasant journey!

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