

## Drugs during Labour

Before accepting any drugs or interventions, to help you consider the possible effects carefully, useful questions to ask are:

**What are you offering me?**

**What are the benefits of this medication or action?**

**What are the possible risks?**

**What alternatives are there?**

**What if we do nothing? – not talk the medication or action?**

- All drugs cross the placenta and will have an effect on the baby which will vary according to how much the drug is used and how long it is in the other's system before the baby is born.
- Before birth, the mother will metabolise and eliminate the drug from her own body as well as her baby's. After birth, the baby must undertake these processes itself and this can take some time (day's or longer) due to it's immature liver and kidneys.
- It is impossible to predict how drugs will affect either the mother or her unborn baby.
- Everyone has their own tolerance to drugs, with some people finding that they are very sensitive while others are not. If you have not been exposed to he drugs given in labour before, you will not know how they may affect you. It is impossible to know how your unborn baby will react to exposure to these drugs during labour.
- There are alternative ways to ease the pain of labour without using drugs and these should be explored fully before drugs are accepted.

These include:

- Touch, massage
- Change of position
- Movement – rocking, walking
- Water – bath or shower
- Homoeopathic Remedies
- Loving encouragement
- Aromatherapy
- Expression – making sounds – crying – letting your fears out
- Breathing deeper
- Talk to your baby – tune in to what the baby needs, ask the baby for what you need

*The true authority in any birth is the Mother and her partner.*

*Remember - you have the right to decline any drugs or actions offered to you at any time in a hospital. You also have the right to ask people to leave the room at any time.*

