



TENS

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulator
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What is a TENS?

A TENS is a great drug free way to help distract you from labor pain. A TENS is a small device that can be used to emit mild bursts of electricity through the skin. The TENS is completely controlled by the pregnant woman wearing it. The unit consists of two sets of lead wires that connect to four electrode pads. When turned on the TENS gives out a tingly sensation to the area where the electrodes are placed. This helps in a couple of ways: to alleviate labor pain by helping your body release natural pain-killers called endorphins and by interrupting the pain response to the brain.

How is a TENS used?

The pads should be placed low on the back to help alleviate back pain and pain associated with labor contractions. Some TENS units have a boost button that should be pressed during a contraction to help give a little more stimulation to help distract you. There are controls on the unit that help you to turn the stimulation up as your labor progresses. TENS units have been found to be more helpful the sooner in labor you use it. The TENS units I rent are designed specifically for labor. There are two different modes that offer a consistent pulsing to help keep you relaxed and eliminate back pain between contractions. There is also a boost button that you press when a contraction begins that transmits a constant massaging sensation.

What are the benefits of using a TENS in labor?

TENS machines do not completely mask or get rid of the pain in labor, but it does help distract you from it. It allows the laboring woman a sense of control since she is able to help herself through contractions by increasing the stimulation to her back, and by pressing the special boost button when a contraction begins. Using a TENS is completely drug free and can help reduce the laboring woman's need for pain medication, or eliminate the need altogether! The TENS can be used in any position, keeping you free to move around as the need arises. The only place the TENS can not be used is in the shower or bath, but the pads are reusable and can easily be reapplied once you are out of the water and dry.

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