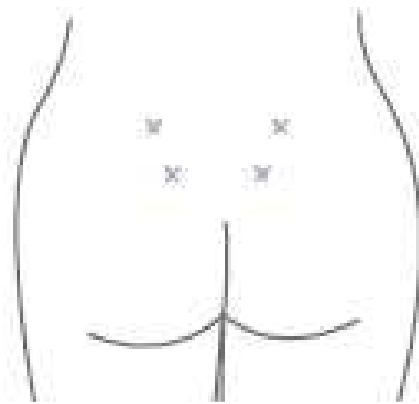


STERILE WATER INJECTIONS

Women's experiences of pain in labour are intensely personal and individual. Many women are keen to manage the sensations of labour as naturally as possible. For some women, back pain is a very difficult phenomenon to manage. Approximately one third of labouring women experience severe, intractable, low back pain during labour. For those women who are concerned about the effect of chemical forms of pain relief on themselves and their babies, intradermal injections of sterile water provides another non pharmacological option.

What is it? A small amount of sterile water injected in four places just under the skin that covers the sacrum – the lower part of the back.



How does it work? It is thought that the sterile water injections stimulate the nerves which quickly send messages to the brain and interrupt the slower messages from inside the body – this has been called the 'gate control' theory of pain management.

When would it be given? If a woman had severe back pain in labour and wanted something to help with the pain, intradermal injections of sterile water have been found to stop the backache for over 90% of women. It is given while a woman is contracting. For those women it works for, the relief has been immediate. The injection can be repeated if necessary.

What does it feel like? It has a sharp, wasp-like sting, which lasts about 20 seconds.

Who gives the injections? Midwives and doctors can give the injections. Two people give the injections at the same time to minimise the length of time of the sting.