

Bellingham Birth Center

2430 Cornwall Avenue Bellingham, WA 98225 (360) 752-2229 fax: 752-2228

Informed Consent for Nitrous Oxide Use

Nitrous oxide is a tasteless, odorless gas which can be used to provide some degree of pain relief during labor, birth, or postpartum procedures such as suturing. Women who use nitrous oxide in labor are fully awake, aware of their surroundings, and able to respond rationally to questions and directions. Nitrous oxide typically causes a state of relaxation, euphoria, and a reduction or elimination of anxiety. It offers some degree of pain relief for most women, though absolute pain relief cannot be guaranteed.

Nitrous oxide is self-administered by inhalation through a mask. The effects cease within seconds of stopping inhalation. Nitrous oxide has not been shown to affect labor patterns, impact the strength of contractions, or cause breathing problems in babies after birth.

Side effects of nitrous oxide for the mother may include: tingling, a sense of heaviness in legs, laughter, a sense of detachment from the environment, sluggishness, nausea, vomiting, and headache. All of these side effects are temporary.

Alternatives to nitrous oxide include warm water immersion, position changes, and sterile water injections in labor and a local anesthetic for pain relief during suturing if repair is needed postpartum. If you require additional pain relief such as epidural or narcotics, hospital transfer can usually be facilitated, though this takes some time.

I have read the above on use of nitrous oxide, its risks, benefits, and alternatives. I accept and understand that the use of nitrous oxide has limitations and risks and that absolute pain relief cannot be guaranteed. I have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I chose to have the option of nitrous oxide use at my birth center birth.

Non-Covered Service Agreement for Use of Nitrous Oxide

BBC offers 50% nitrous oxide/50% oxygen for analgesia. At this concentration, nitrous oxide is used for analgesia (partial pain relief without loss of consciousness), NOT anesthesia (pain relief with loss of consciousness). Nitrous oxide used in this manner is not considered medically necessary and therefore is not covered by insurance.

In order to make this option available to everyone, we ask for reimbursement on an honor system sliding scale from \$0 to \$300.

The birth center will mail a sliding scale invoice in the weeks following the birth.

I have read the above on the use of nitrous oxide, its risks, benefits, and alternatives. I accept and understand that the use of nitrous oxide has limitations and risks and that absolute pain relief cannot be guaranteed. I have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I chose to have the option of nitrous oxide use at my birth center birth.

I have also read and understand the non-covered services agreement for use of nitrous oxide and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction.

Client Signature

Date

Printed Client Name