

# BELLINGHAM BIRTH CENTER, INC

2430 CORNWALL AVENUE BELLINGHAM, WA 98225

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## 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. People who use nitrous oxide 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 in anxiety. It offers some degree of pain relief to most that use it.

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 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.

## Non-Covered Service Agreement for Use of Nitrous Oxide

BBC offers a blend of 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 \$350. 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, as well as the non-covered service fee. 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 choose to have the option of nitrous oxide use at my birth center.

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Client Signature

Date Signed

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Printed Name