

Most first-time moms say labor pains were manageable

24 May 2018



(HealthDay)—Many first-time mothers have mistaken ideas about managing the pain of childbirth, a new survey reveals.

The survey, commissioned by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), included more than 900 U.S. mothers, 73 percent of whom had vaginal births.

While many said they had less pain than feared, many went into labor with false ideas about what to expect:

- 74 percent thought they couldn't have an epidural after a certain time in labor, even though the injections can be given until the baby's head begins to emerge.
- 44 percent feared pain at the epidural injection site would last a long time.
- 26 percent thought having an epidural would slow labor.
- 20 percent believed only one pain management option could be provided.

Slightly more than half said contractions were the most painful part of the experience, akin to extreme menstrual cramps. One in five said pushing or post-delivery hurt most.

In all, 46 percent of the moms said the pain they experienced during their first delivery was less than expected, and 90 percent said their pain management was effective.

"First-time mothers need to know that a wide variety of options exist to manage [pain](#), from [epidural](#) to massage, [nitrous oxide](#) to breathing techniques, and that it's acceptable to change methods or use a combination during nearly every stage of labor," ASA President Dr. James Grant said in a society news release.

"But it's also important to be flexible, since it may be necessary to change [pain management](#) methods based on the [labor](#) process itself," he added.

More information: The U.S. Office on Women's Health has more on [labor and birth](#).

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APA citation: Most first-time moms say labor pains were manageable (2018, May 24) retrieved 18 July 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-first-time-moms-labor-pains.html>

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