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## LAMAZE BREATHING TECHNIQUES DURING LABOUR

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### ABSTRACT

*Lamaze breathing historically is considered the hallmark of Lamaze preparation for childbirth. This column discusses breathing in the larger context of contemporary Lamaze. Controlled breathing enhances relaxation and decreases perception of pain. It is one of many comfort strategies taught in Lamaze classes. In restricted birthing environments, breathing may be the only nonpharmacological comfort strategy available to women. Conscious breathing and relaxation, especially in combination with a wide variety of comfort strategies, can help women avoid unnecessary medical intervention and have a safe, healthy birth.*

**Keywords:** Lamaze breathing, Hydrotherapy, Massage, Lamaze techniques.

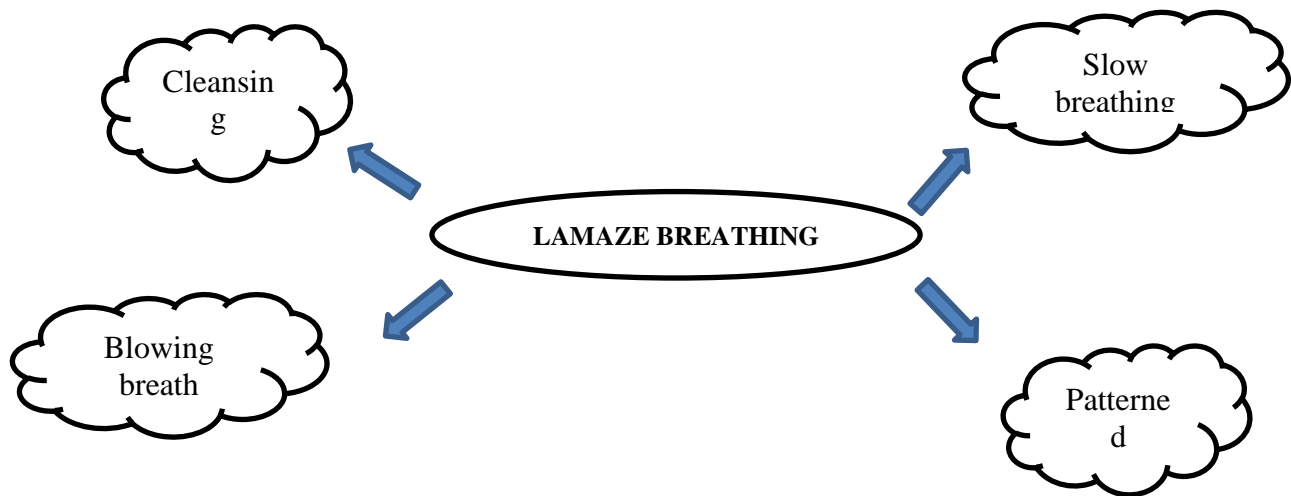
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### INTRODUCTION

The Lamaze method is typically known for controlled breathing techniques but it includes a number of comfort strategies that can be used during [labor](#). The Lamaze technique was started as prepared child birth technique popularized in the 1950s by French obstetrician Dr.Fernand Lamaze based on his observation in the soviet union as an alternative to the use of medical intervention during childbirth. Breathing techniques increase relaxation and decrease the perception of pain. In addition to breathing, other information about preparing for childbirth is covered. Lamaze is taught in a series of classes attended by both the mother and her partner, when possible. The Lamaze method doesn't explicitly encourage or discourage medications but seeks to educate women about their options so they can make a birth plan that suits their individual needs.

### DEFINITION:

Lamaze is a breathing technique used to help the pregnant mother to relax during labour. In case of a first-time mother, it is likely that the unknown pain related to labor can cause trepidation concerning the labour process. Lamaze breathing is a coping mechanism that allows to decrease the perception of pain associated with delivery.

**TYPES OF LAMAZE BREATHING:****1. CLEANSING BREATHING:**

This is a deep, slow inhalation through the nose and a slow exhalation through the mouth. cleansing breaths are used at the beginning and end of each contraction. Also known as a signal breath, a cleaning breath acts as a signal to your partner that a contraction has begun and ended.

**2. SLOW BREATHING:**

It is natural breathing, but slowed as when you are asleep. This is not deep, lung filling breaths that raise your chest and abdomen. Instead, it is shallower, slightly raising your chest with little effort. Begin with a cleansing breath. Now try inhaling to a count of three to five and exhale for the same count. Relax your jaw and your shoulder. inhale one, two, three, four. Exhale one, two, three, four. Continue this for about 90 seconds, then end with another cleansing breath.

**3. BLOWING BREATH:**

This is another slow, shallow breath that is done while you are relaxed. Do not force yourself to go beyond what is comfortable. once again, begin with a cleaning breath. Then, gently inhale through your nose and on the exhale, softly blow through your mouth. To get a feel for the technique, light a candle or hold a piece of paper a few inches away from your face. Inhale gently and then softly blow out the candle or make the paper flutter. Practice this technique for about 90 seconds. Then end with another cleaning breath.

**4. PATTERN BREATHING:**

Patterned breathing is the famous (“hee, hee , hoo”) breathing. Basically , this breathing involves two or four rapid exhales(the “hee, hee, hee”) to one blow(“hoo”).the key hee is to keep a comfortable rhythm with a small, soft inhale in between each exhale and blow. Pretend you are having a contraction. Begin with a cleansing breath. Now begin your patterned breathing and continue for about 90 seconds. End with another cleaning breath.

**CORE PRINCIPLES:**

**1.Conscious Breathing:**

Lamaze breathing is about actively focusing on your breath, rather than letting it become automatic.

**2.pain management:**

The techniques help to reduce pain perception by promoting relaxation and focusing attention away from the pain

**3.Relaxation:**

Lamaze emphasizes relaxation techniques, including breathing exercises, to help manage the physical and emotional stress of labour.

**4.Body awareness:**

Lamaze breathing develops body awareness and improved oxygenation, contributing to a more comfortable and positive birth experience.

**TECHNIQUES:**

- **Slow, Deep Breathing:**

Incorporate slow, deep breaths from your abdomen, focusing on the inhale and exhale.

- **Cleaning breath:**

Start with a slow, deep inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.

- **Modified Paced Breathing:**

As contractions intensify, transition to shorter, shallower breaths, focusing on the rhythm and flow of the breath.

- **Shallow breathing:**

During strong contractions, use shallow, rapid breaths to help manage the intensity of the pain.

- **Visualization and focus:**

Focus on a point, image or mantra to help maintain focus and rhythm during contractions.

**BENEFITS:**

- **Reduce pain perception:**

Lamaze breathing can help reduce the intensity of pain felt during labour.

- **Improved relaxation:**

The techniques promote relaxation, which can help reduce anxiety and stress during labour.

- **Empowerment:**

Learning and practicing Lamaze breathing Lamaze breathing techniques can empower women to actively participate in their birth experiences.

- **Enhanced body awareness:**

Lamaze breathing helps women become more aware of their bodies and the sensation of labor.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This is a method of psychological preparation for child birth developed in the 1950s. It requires classes, practice at home and coaching during labor and delivery.

#### **The classes will be given during the pregnancy:**

- Teach the physiology of pregnancy and child birth.
- Exercises to develop strength in the abdominal muscles and control of isolated muscles of vagina and perineum.
- Technique of breathing and relaxation to promote control and relaxation during labor.
- The woman is conditioned by repetition and practice to dissociate herself from the source of a stimulus by concentration on a focal point by consciously relaxing all muscles and by breathing in a special way at a particular rate.
- The kind and rate of breathing changes with the advancing stages of labor.

#### **a. During the early first stage of labor:**

- When the cervix is <5 cm dilated, contractions occurs at 2-4 mts and lasts for 40-60 sec. Then with frequency of mild to moderate strength, the mother does slow chest breathing during contractions.
- Her fingers may rest lightly on lower ribs to feel them rise and fall. She may perform an effleurage or rhythmic fingertip massage of her lower abdomen during the contractions.
- The rate of respiration is 10 or fewer breathes in a minute, increasing to 12/min as labor intensifies. Her chin is tucked on her chest, the air is blocked from escaping from her lungs, her perineum is relaxed and she bears down forcibly.

#### **b. During active part of first stage of labor:**

- From active part of first stage of labor, up to second stage, the cervix is 5cm to nearly fully dilated. Now the mother breathes quickly and shallowly in her chest.
- The rate of her breathing varies with the strength of the contractions; to as fast as once a second at the peak and slowly to every 6 sec as the uterus relaxes.
- She is coached to concentrate at the focal point she has selected, to perform the effleurage of her abdomen to relax her perineal and vaginal muscles, and to take a cleansing breathe at the beginning and end of each contraction.

#### **c. At the end of first stage of labor:**

- The cervix is almost completely dilated, and the contractions are strong, occurs every 1.5-2 minutes and lasting for 60-90 sec.
- The mother feels the urge to bear down. She aids pushing before full dilatation by combining several lights, shallow breathes in the chest with short puffing exhalations.

**d. During second stage of labor:**

- The mother head and shoulders are supported with pillows. During contractions, she is helped to draw her legs back, flexing the thigh against the abdomen, holding them behind the lower thigh with her hands.
- Her chin is tucked on her chest, the air is blocked from escaping from her lungs, her perineum is relaxed and she bears down forcibly.
- Depending on the length of the contraction, several pushes of 10-15 or more seconds, may be possible during the contractions.
- As the baby head crowns, she is asked to push lightly, so that head may be delivered slowly.

**Pain management:**

The Lamaze method encourages natural pain management techniques, such as:

- **Breathing Techniques:** Use the breathing techniques discussed earlier to manage pain and stay focused.
- **Movement:** Changing positions and moving around can help labor progress and reduce discomfort.
- **Hydrotherapy:** Taking a warm bath or shower can provide relief from contractions.
- **Massage:** Having your partner or support person massage your back, shoulders,

**EFFECTS OF LAMAZE BREATHING:**

Lamaze breathing techniques are a learned skill which enhances relaxation. Rhythmic breathing develops body awareness and improved oxygenation. The relaxation and oxygenation aspects of the breathing techniques reduce pain perception. Slow, Rhythmic Breathing of mild intensity stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the tranquilizing portion of the nervous system. Rapid and tense breathing stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, which is the arousal portion of the nervous system and is associated with stress and panic.

**ADVANTAGES**

- The need for little or no analgesia for relief of pain during labor.
- It gives great sense of self satisfaction at delivery, it teaches the women to avoid fears about doubts.
- It focuses on providing a positive environment and well- being during delivery. It encourages the interaction between body, mind and environment.

**DISADVANTAGES**

- Pain will be present despite practice in the Lamaze method.
- This is done to combat the actual pain involved in delivery and may act as a distraction during early onset of pain only.
- Need lot of commitment and patience, classes can be costly and needs a trained person to

teach the method.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Lamaze method can simplify the journey through pregnancy and child birth by providing with tools and knowledge need for a positive birth experience. By focusing on education, breathing techniques, and relaxation, the Lamaze method empowers expectant mothers to manage pain and reduce anxiety during labour, whether you are a first- time parent or have experienced child birth before, the Lamaze method can help the labour with confidence and calm.

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