

Using the Birth Ball

Benefits of the birth ball:

- It facilitates the most comfortable and useful positions for labor. Proper positioning with the knees apart, pressure on the whole sitting area, and the pelvis tilted forward.
- It enhances labor by promoting the best position of the baby in relation to mom's pelvis.
- It is especially helpful if the baby is posterior when mom kneels over the ball.
- It offers easy access to mom's back for massage in the kneeling position also.
- It enhances labor with gentle movement, optimal positioning and support.
- It relieves nervous tension and provides comfort and relaxation for mom.
- It is easy to get on and off and can be used on the floor, in the shower, on the bed, etc.
- It is a comfortable alternative as a sitting or kneeling position or for back support.
- It is also a comfortable seat postpartum if mom's bottom is tender!

Positions in which birth ball can be used:

1. Sitting on the ball on the floor
 - Mom can gently rock side to side or back and forth or gently bounce.
 - This promotes a modified squatting position.
 - The benefits include comfort, rotation of the baby, and widens the pelvic outlet.
2. Knee-chest position
 - Mom can kneel on a pillow and lean onto/over the ball.
 - Mom can sit on ball and lean over onto the bed.
 - The ball can be placed on a bean bag and mom can lean over it while standing.
 - The benefits of this position include the maximum potential for rotating baby, great access for back massage or counterpressure.
3. Leaning against the ball
 - The ball can be positioned behind mom's back in bed or against a wall as mom leans onto it.
 - This provides relaxation and support as mother leans against it, bouncing gently against ball while doing slight knee bends.
 - The benefits include providing a distraction and a "piston action" movement to enhance the labor process.

To use the birth ball:

- Ask the nursing staff to bring the ball into your room
- Cover the ball with a towel or blanket for maximum comfort.
- Always have someone supporting mom while she is using the ball.
- The taller mom is the bigger the ball she should use.