

# Benefits of Using a Birth Ball

## BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER LABOR THERE ARE BENEFITS TO USING A "BIRTH BALL"

When you sit on a ball, the abdominal and lower back muscles are used to help you keep your balance. Your pelvis tilts forward, which encourages the baby to move into a good position. While sitting on the ball, moving your hips for comfort and balance comes naturally. Rocking the pelvis and shifting weight in the upright position can increase blood circulation, lessen back pain, and improve posture. The gentle pressure of the ball may help relieve discomfort from hemorrhoids and pressure on the pelvic floor. Rocking or gentle bouncing may comfort your baby before and after birth. Try sitting on a ball at a desk or while watching TV, as well as using one in an exercise program.

## HOW TO USE A BIRTH BALL SAFELY

While sitting on the ball, you should be barefooted or wearing rubber soled shoes. The ball should fit like a chair. Hips, knees, and ankles should each be bent to 90°. Because your center of gravity changes during pregnancy, you should have a source of support near you while using the ball to provide balance if you need it.

## POSITIONS AND MOVEMENTS TO TRY



Begin moving in a circular or figure-eight motion while sitting on the ball. This relaxes the back and pelvic areas and helps you to establish your balance. Add pelvic tilts, moving forward and back, or side-to-side.



A kneeling position allows for free movement of the pelvis, while gravity encourages the largest and heaviest part of the baby to rotate off of mom's back to an anterior position. Putting the weight of the upper body on the ball keeps weight off the wrists.

## ON THE BALL - POSITIONS AND MOVEMENTS TO TRY



Sit on the ball and lean forward relaxing on a pillow placed on a table, bed, or chair. This helps relieve back pain by moving the baby forward.



Standing while leaning on a ball that is placed on the wall, a bed, or table, encourages pelvic swaying and rotation, which may help relieve pain and encourage the baby to descend. Standing, with your back on the ball against the wall offers pleasant pressure for an aching back, or support for a wall-squat position.



Kneel on the floor or on the bed with the ball in front of you. Lean over the ball; roll it forward and back to find a comfortable position for your upper body to rest. Your arms may hug the ball, or be relaxed hanging over it. Your partner may apply back pressure to help relieve pain.



Sitting on the ball, lean back into your partner who is sitting on a chair behind you.



The ball may be taken into the shower to sit on while you enjoy the sensations of the warm water.