HYDROTHERAPY DURING LABOR

Purpose: To describe the use of water in a tub or shower to promote relaxation and provide comfort for a laboring woman.

Policy:

A. Women are eligible to use the tub for hydrotherapy during labor if the following conditions are met:
   - Maternal and fetal vital signs are within normal limits on admission and remain so.

B. Women may not use hydrotherapy if any of the following conditions are noted:
   - Anticipated birth complications.
   - Auscultated Category II fetal heart rate, Category II electronic fetal monitoring tracing, or other condition requiring continuous electronic fetal monitoring, unless waterproof telemetry is available.
   - Category III fetal heart rate tracing or other condition requiring immediate delivery

C. Discuss benefits and risks of water immersion for labor with patient.

D. Water temperature may vary within a range from 95° to 101° degrees Fahrenheit. The water temperature should be maintained at the lower end of the stated range, and warmed to within the higher range only if requested by the laboring woman.

E. A responsible adult should remain with the laboring woman while she is in the tub.

F. The woman may be in or out of the water as she desires; however, maternal vital signs, fetal heart rate and labor progress assessments should continue per guidelines. The outcome of such assessments could require the end of hydrotherapy.

Resources:


From: