

Scottish Hospital Practice

Positions adopted in the second stage of labour vary from upright positions such as kneeling, squatting, standing, on all fours to lying on side, lying semi-recumbent on bed and lithotomy to name a few.

Recent research revealed that women having a water birth in a hospital obstetric unit had fewer medical interventions and complications during and after birth.

A 2018 Cochrane review revealed that women who received an epidural and moved between lying down on their side positions as opposed to an upright position, had resulted in more normal births, a better experience and no harm to mother or baby.

- Walker KF, Kibuka M, Thornton JG, Jones NW. Maternal position in the second stage of labour for women with epidural anaesthesia. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2018, Issue 11 Art. No.: CD008070. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD008070.pub4
<https://www.rcm.org.uk/media-releases/2022/july-1/rcm-welcomes-research-showing-benefits-of-water-birth>
- Recommendations | Intrapartum care for healthy women and babies | Guidance | NICE
<https://www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/your-guide-labour/second-stage-labour>



Illustrations : Simkin & Ancheta (2005)

https://www.has-sante.fr/upload/docs/application/pdf/2018-01/accouchement_normal_-_recommandations.pdf#page23

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg190/resources/intrapartum-care-for-healthy-women-and-babies-35109866447557>

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/260178/9789241550215-eng.pdf>

Recommandation childbirth position

NICE :

Discourage the woman from lying supine or semi-supine in the second stage of labour and encourage her to adopt any other position that she finds most comfortable.

Inform the woman that in the second stage she should be guided by her own urge to push.

If pushing is ineffective or if requested by the woman, offer strategies to assist birth, such as support, change of position, emptying of the bladder and encouragement.



WHO :

Birth position for women with epidural analgesia : For women with epidural analgesia, encouraging the adoption of a birth position of the individual woman's choice, including upright birth positions, is recommended.

the recommendations are the same for women without epidural analgesia



HAS :

There is no particular posture that has demonstrated its superiority.

In the absence of contraindications and subject to maternal and fetal monitoring, it is recommended to encourage women to adopt the postures they deem most comfortable during the second stage of labour.

Swiss Hospital Practice

- The vast majority of deliveries are in the gynecological position (on the back, feet in stirrups)
- Other positions regularly observed: lying on the side, on all fours / on the knees
- If physiological, encourage changing to positions that free the sacrum
- Not all midwives offer this
 - Not all midwives are comfortable with different positions
- Women with epidurals instinctively stay in gynecological position
 - Women's lack of knowledge?
- There are materials in the delivery room to encourage alternative positions (espaliers, Maya chair, lianas, floor mats ...)

These elements affect the hospital environment. Nevertheless, in birth centers, alternative birthing positions are more frequent.