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## **Laughing Gas for Labor: Fairview Range Offers Nitrous Oxide to Manage Pain**

Hibbing, Minn. – There is a new option at Fairview Range for birthing mothers to ease the pain of labor: nitrous oxide.

Nitrous oxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas made for inhalation to provide analgesia during painful procedures. Many Americans are most familiar with it as “laughing gas” used for dental procedures. It was a popular choice for pain relief from the 1930s through the 1970s, and has recently seen a re-emergence for use during labor.

“At Fairview Range, our goal is to provide moms with the options they desire for labor pain management,” said Riana Damjanovich, Patient Care Manager, Fairview Range Women's Health and Birth Center. “We are proud to offer a wide range of options, from holistic labor support and hydrotherapy to narcotic therapy and epidural anesthesia, with a variety of options in between. This is why we now offer Nitrous Oxide.”

Nitrous oxide gas is a 50/50 blend of nitrous and oxygen. Unlike a continuous stream at a dental office, birthing mothers can self-administer nitrous oxide using a face mask and have the ability to control when they inhale the gas, which has a rapid onset. Patients breathe the gas for a short time to help them through a contraction and then remove the mask until it's needed again.

Breathing nitrous oxide gives patients additional oxygen and also releases endorphins, and the calming effect can help to reduce the sensation of pain. Most women feel the positive effect of pain relief, decreased anxiety, euphoria, and a feeling of not caring about the pain within 30 to 60 seconds. Patients using nitrous oxide remain awake and alert. The gas does not affect the woman's ability to push during labor and is safe for mom and baby. It is mild and non-toxic and leaves the patient's system within five minutes of each breath. By the conclusion of delivery, it has left the patient's body completely.

Potential side effects include dizziness, nausea and unsteadiness. If desired, a mother may stop using nitrous oxide and switch to another form of pain medication during labor.

For more information, please talk with your OB provider or nurse or call with Fairview Range Women's Health & Birth Center at 218-362-6641.

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Fairview Range is a family of medical providers based in Hibbing, and includes Fairview Range Medical Center, Fairview Mesaba Clinics (with locations in Hibbing, Nashwauk and Mountain Iron), home care, hospice and a medical supply provider. Fairview Range offers more than 60 medical services, including ENT, surgery, urology, occupational therapy, cardiac rehabilitation, radiation therapy, sleep lab, sports medicine and obstetrics/gynecology, and also owns Fairview Range Greenview Residence, a memory care facility, located on the medical campus.