

## What is Labour TENS?

**Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)** is a small battery powered device which sends a pulsed electrical stimulus via electrode pads to the skin. TENS has been professionally researched, tried and tested in Australian and European hospitals and clinics since the 1960's.

TENS is commonly endorsed and used by Midwives, Obstetricians, Physiotherapists, Doctors, Nurses and Anaesthetist as a method of pain management in childbirth and chronic pain.

## How does Labour TENS work during childbirth?

Labour TENS works using two methods:

- Inhibits transmission of chemical messages which send pain signals to the brain (see Gate Theory)
- Releases natural pain killers (endorphins and encephalins)

## The Pain Gate Theory

Melzak and Wall proposed the 'Gate Theory' in 1965, and it remains the most respected theory of pain perception. They showed that pain impulses could be overridden and the perception of pain could be altered.

Basically the brain can only cope with a certain amount of information at once. For unknown reasons, probably linked to survival, sensation impulses from the nerves have priority over pain signals. When TENS is used you feel this stimulation strongly and the sense of pain gets put to the 'back of your mind'. You perceive the pain as less intense. Also endorphins are the body's natural painkillers – TENS stimulates endorphin release helping reduce pain.

## What does TENS feel like?

- A pleasant tingling sensation on the skin where the electrode pads are placed.

## How is labour TENS used?

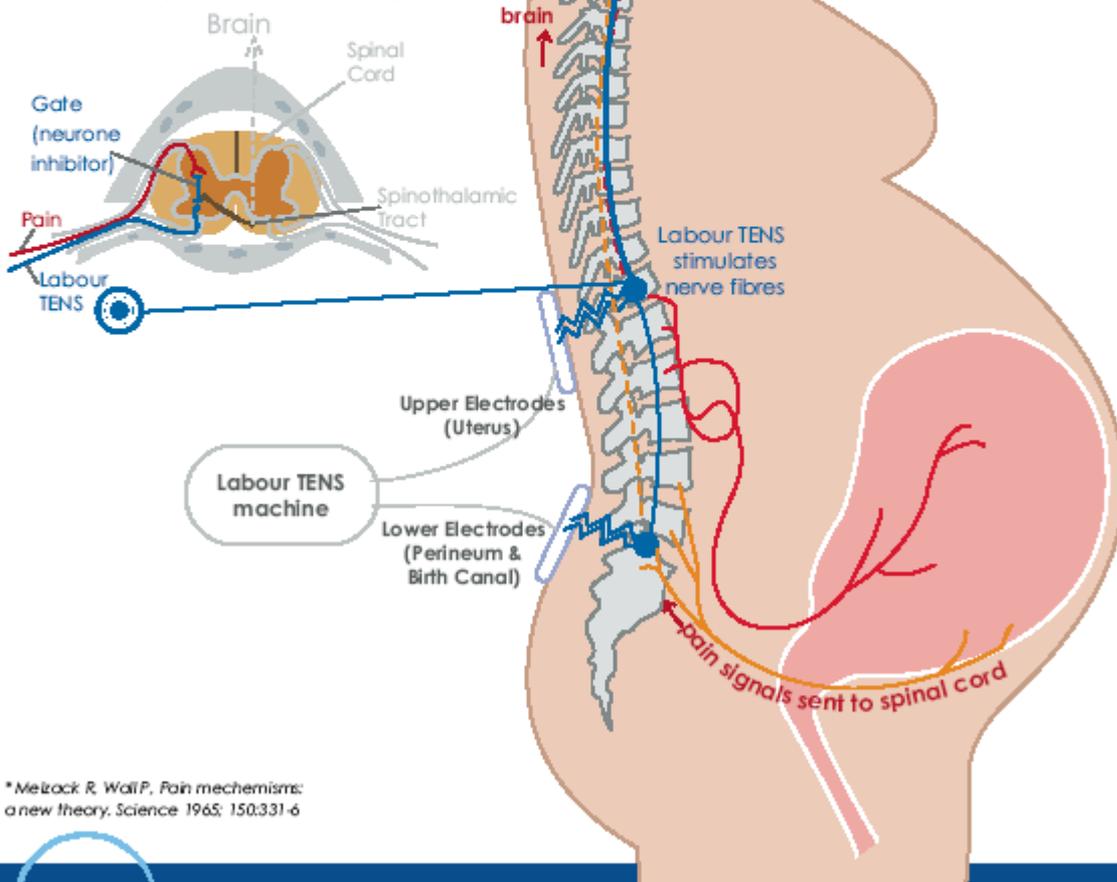


Self adhesive electrodes are placed on the lower and mid back as shown. Switch on the TENS and turn it up until you feel the tingling. Use the boost button to increase the intensity to ride out each contraction. The unit can be worn as needed for as long as desired but a minimum of 30 minutes is recommended for labour pains. You will receive full instructions with each TENS machine or contact our support line for more help. Use Labour TENS at home when the contractions begin and continue for up to several hours after birth. Labour TENS will help with uterine contractions afterbirth and whilst breast feeding.

# HOW TENS WORKS DURING LABOUR

Labour TENS is a small battery powered device which sends a small electrical impulse via pads to the lower back.

Labour TENS stimulates large nerve fibres which carry touch sensations quickly to the brain (see blue line). These sensory messages are deemed high priority by the brain and limit other information getting through. The slower pain messages carried by smaller nerves (orange and red lines) are stopped by a chemical neurone inhibitor causing a virtual gate (Gate Theory - Melzack and Wall 1965\*). The sensation of pain is therefore reduced. Labour TENS also stimulates the body to release natural pain killers called Endorphins.



\* Melzack R, Wall P, Pain mechanisms: a new theory. Science 1965; 150:331-6

  
**Labour TENS**  
[www.labourtens.com.au](http://www.labourtens.com.au)

**For best results:** Use at the beginning of Labour, during each stage of childbirth, and for up to several hours afterwards. Specifically designed for labour to relieve pain, reduce vaginal trauma and painful uterine contractions after birth.

## Benefits of Labour TENS

- No harm to baby
- Drug free pain control
- Instant long lasting pain relief
- No side effects or drowsiness
- Fully controllable with boost button
- Used at home when contractions start
- Can be used with other methods /drugs
- Safe and easy to use at home or in hospital
- Proven up to 80% effective for reducing labour pain
- Non invasive giving freedom to move and walk about

## Frequently asked questions:

### When do I start using the Labour TENS?

Labour TENS is used in the first stage of labour when the contractions begin and start to become painful. Use the TENS as directed whilst at home.

### How long should Labour TENS be used for?

The unit can be worn as needed for as long as desired. It is best used for a minimum of 30 minutes throughout birth and up to several hours afterwards.

### Can I practice with TENS?

Yes, we recommend you tryout the Labour TENS beforehand so that you are familiar with the operation. You may place the pads on your lower back as you would during labour or you may place them on the inside of your forearm to test

### Is TENS safe?

Yes. Labour TENS is specifically designed for Labour. However there are a few precautions. Do not use over broken or desensitised skin. Do not use before 36 weeks unless approved by your doctor. Seek advice from doctor if you have unstable epilepsy or a pacemaker.

### I would like a water birth - can I use Labour TENS?

Yes, although **NOT** whilst in the water. Use during the first stage of labour which may take several hours. The midwife will not usually ask you to enter the water after you are 5cm dilated. You need to **REMOVE** the **TENS BEFORE** you enter the water.

### Can I use Labour Tens with other pain relief methods?

Yes. You may continue using Labour TENS with any other methods. All drugs and natural methods such are compatible. You will need less pain medication if you use Labour TENS.

### Can I use an ordinary TENS machine?

It is not recommended as an ordinary TENS will be less effective. Labour TENS uses large electrode pads and has two specially designed programs for Labour Pain. Labour TENS is the only TENS with a boost button for changing quickly to a high intensity programme for contractions. This allows you to easily go between rest mode and boost mode.

### **Can I take the TENS into hospital with me?**

Yes. The midwives and doctors are usually very happy for women to use TENS. Check with your midwife or doctor if you are unsure. You may need to turn the TENS off temporarily whilst using electronic monitoring equipment.

### **When is the best time to order?**

Order your Labour TENS hire as soon as possible to secure your machine. Your hire start date is up to you – we recommend three weeks before your due date. The Labour TENS will be posted early to arrive on your hire start date. Order online at: **[www.LabourTENS.com.au](http://www.LabourTENS.com.au)** or via phone on (02) 94002709

### **What if I am due in less than 2 weeks?**

We recommend you book express delivery for \$5 extra online or phone the office to discuss delivery options.

### **Heather's story**

"As a Registered Nurse I worked in a pain clinic educating patients about TENS and natural pain management. When I was pregnant I was naturally keen to try TENS for labour. After a long and complicated first birth I wanted this one to be a drug free, natural home birth. I used Labour TENS at the start of labour and quickly found it to be indispensable. I also kept moving around using breathing techniques, massage and yoga postures I'd learnt. My second child was a natural delivery born at home on Mother's Day with no drugs - just Labour TENS.

I was so impressed with Labour TENS that when I started to teach Pre-natal Yoga I naturally shared the information and experience with my students. They reported difficulty in finding Obstetric TENS machines to hire, and were frequently miss-lead. You need a specialist obstetric TENS for labour as 'ordinary' TENS will not work. After much research I bought a few Labour TENS and began hiring them to my students. The feedback has been incredibly positive. Most women who use the Labour TENS feel relaxed and in control of their pain. They often report having a drug free, natural birth. Due to overwhelming demand from women, Labour TENS has become an Australian wide internet based business. We are the Labour TENS specialists in Australia and provide education for midwives, obstetricians and physiotherapists. We have a telephone support service for women and are dedicated to providing more choice for women in labour. I have midwives and obstetricians calling me for more information because they are so impressed with what they see."