

Light Touch Massage

This is a naturopathic technique that is enjoyed by both mums and dads and they can practice on each other. Learnings are experiential so we must experience it to know the wonderful benefits of it. The technique was developed by Constance Palinsky after much research into pain management and relaxation methods. The technique is very simple yet very effective. It is a wonderful comfort measure that the birthing companion brings to the birthing room.

Just below the surface of the skin, attached to the hair follicles is a smooth muscle called the erector pili. The muscle reacts to stimuli by contracting. When this occurs, the muscle pulls up the surface hair, becomes erect, and causes goose bumps. The goose bumps, in turn, help to create endorphins in the brain, enabling you to relax.

When working with your couple ask them to get the image of a tree and when they get to the 3rd branch, the goose bumps are going to start.

TECHNIQUE

1.

The birthing companion places his/her hands at the small of the back to become centered. Using the back side of the fingers (fingernails) the companion places his/her hands so that they meet at the base of the spine. The fingers are then drawn up and out from the spine like tracing the trunk and branches of a tree.

The pattern is gradually continued following the spine upward across the back until the base of the neck is reached. Just very gently massage upper neck and tops of shoulders.

2.

The second motion involves placing the back of the fingers at the base of the spine and then, as before, gradually working upward, forming a horizontal, figure eight pattern that criss-crosses at the centre of the back gradually making your way up to the shoulders.

Normally, when light touch is applied in a massage setting, the practitioner is cautioned not to extend the hands near the breasts or ears, as these are erogenous zones. Just the opposite is true during your birthing. If the birthing companion extends his hands out and around the sides of the breast and nipples, not only are endorphins produced, but also a hormone- oxytocin is created that naturally enhances uterine surges.

