

## LABOUR-AID

Labour is an intense, energy-consuming activity. It may be the most strenuous work you have ever done. A labouring woman is bound to be exhausted if she is starving, especially if she is vomiting too. She has to draw on her fat reserves for energy, with the result that she becomes dehydrated and ketones, produced by metabolization of fat, appear in her urine. So ketosis occurs less often in birth at home because she can drink when she wishes and eat according to her appetite. But if labour is very tiring, here are some simple remedies:

- Have a drink to adjust your body's electrolyte balance such as "Labour-Aid". This drink has been devised by American home birth midwives specifically for women in labour.  
You make it by mixing together 1 litre water, 1/3 cup honey, 1/3 cup lemon juice, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon baking powder and 2 crushed calcium tablets (dolomite tablets).
- Eat something that will just slip down. You may fancy frozen yoghurt or fromage frais, some smooth porridge with honey or syrup, or a few spoonfuls of mashed mango. These will give you instant energy.
- Do not fight the pain. Go right into it instead. Resisting it means that you are not allowing your body to open up. A surprising release can occur when we accept pain and go with it.
- Whatever happens during contractions, rest completely in each interval between. Drop forwards on to pillows. It is often possible to sleep for half a minute before the next contraction starts. Ask your birth partner to rest a hand on your abdomen and tell you softly when the next one is starting, so that you can tune in to it and not be taken by surprise.
- Remember that you are having a baby. It is easy to forget these aides when you're in labour, so ensure your support people are well prepared.

(Ref: Birth Your Way, by Sheila Kitzinger)

Midwifery/Info sheets/Labour-aid