

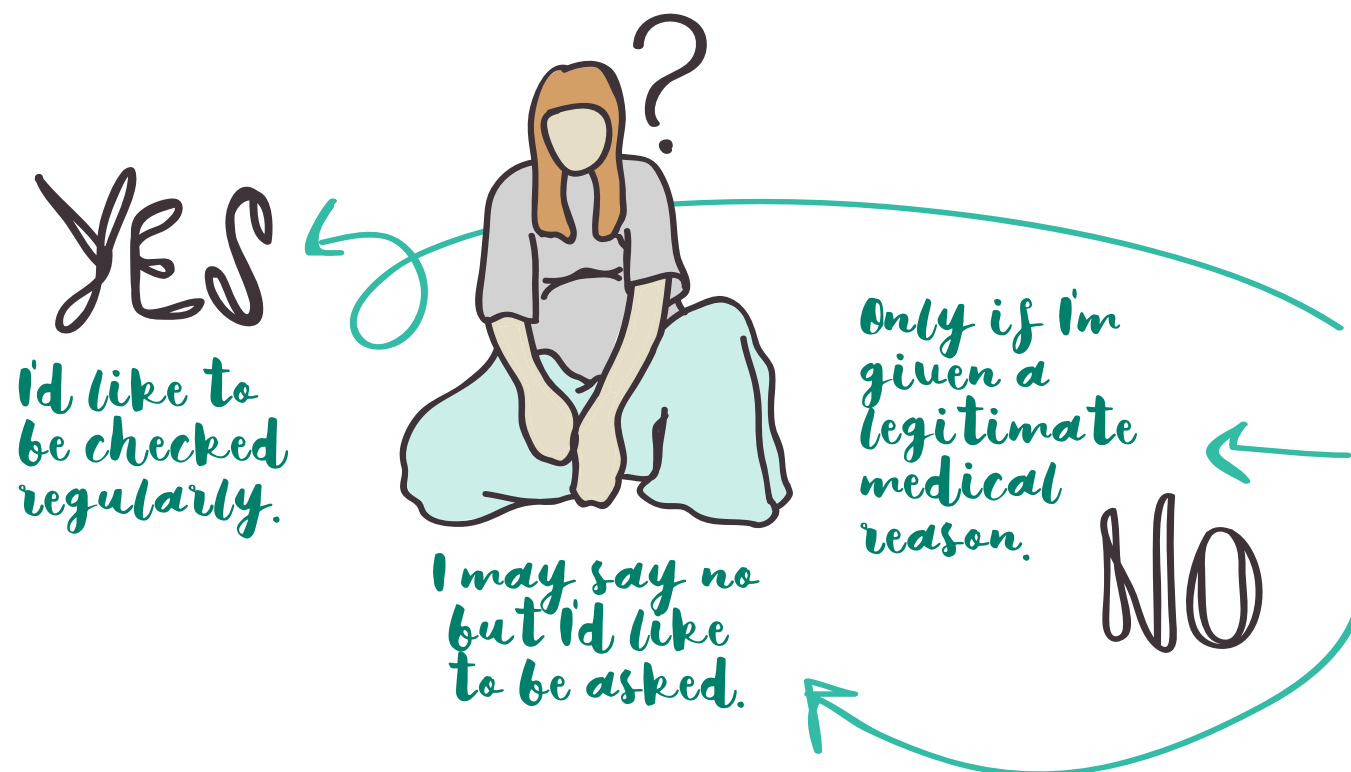
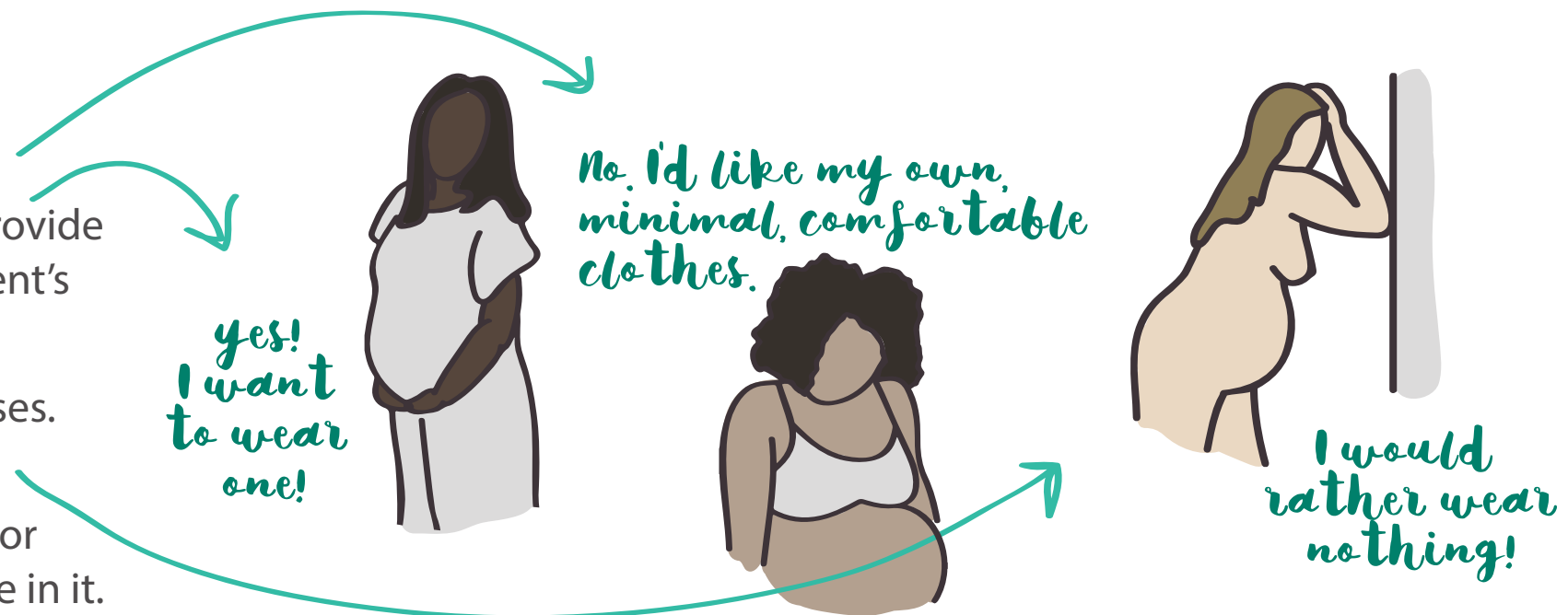
# COMMON BIRTH INTERVENTIONS AND YOUR OPTIONS FOR USING THEM

## hospital gowns

**PURPOSE:** Hospital gowns are designed to provide hospital staff easy access to any part of a patient's body that needs to be treated.

**PROS:** Easily replaced if or when the need arises.

**CONS:** They're one size-fits-all, which may not fit you; you may not like the way it covers or cannot cover you; you may feel uncomfortable in it.



## vaginal exams

**PURPOSE:** Vaginal exams are conducted mainly to determine effacement (softening and thinning of cervix), dilation (opening of cervix, 0-10 cm), and station and position of the baby. In hospitals they most often happen at admission, then every four hours.

**PROS:** Provide information about the "progress" of labor.

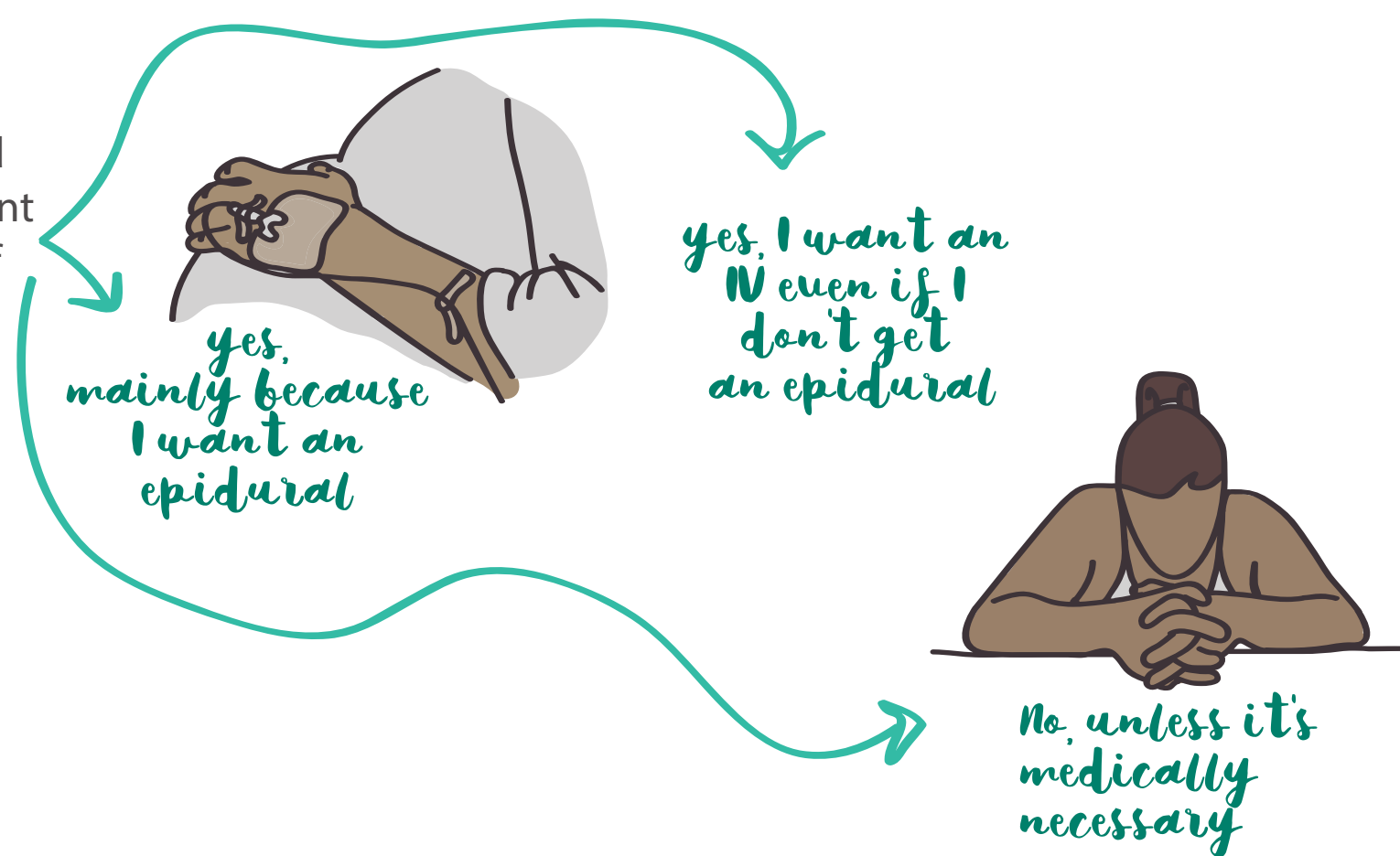
**CONS:** Do not predict how labor will progress; can disrupt labor; can increase the risk of infection; can cause discouragement if indicating "lack of progress"; and are invasive.

## IV/Saline-Lock

**PURPOSE:** An IV/Saline-Lock is a catheter usually placed in the hand or lower arm to drip fluids and medication. It's a hospital standard used to prevent dehydration and make the later administration of medicine quicker and easier.

**PROS:** Prevent dehydration. It's also necessary with an epidural or medical labor augmentation (ex. Pitocin).

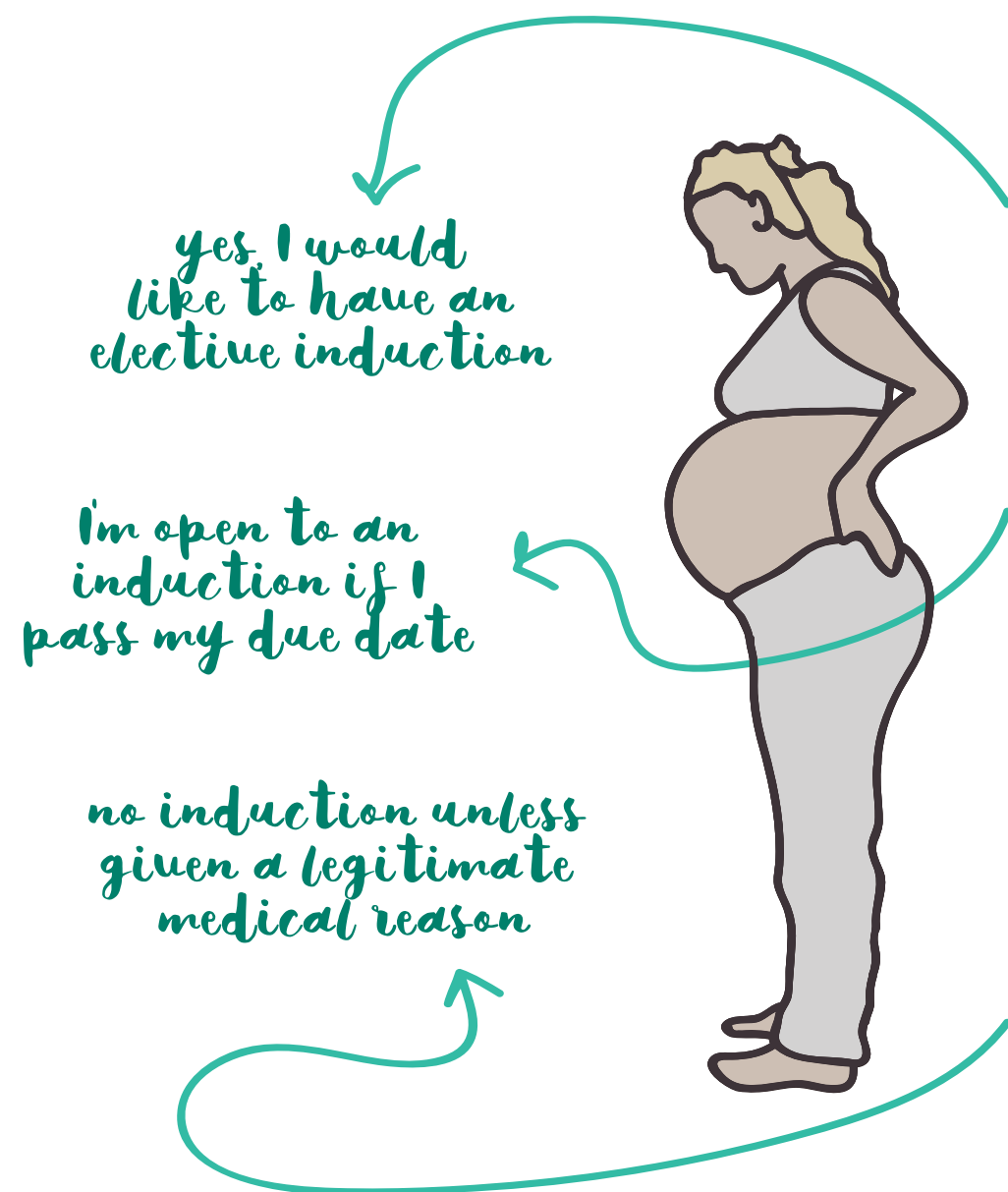
**CONS:** Can be uncomfortable; severely limit movement; and lead to other unwanted interventions (ex. epidural).



## IT IS EVERY PERSON'S *right*

to receive all information on the risks and benefits of any and all interventions offered to them, and to decide whether they would like to utilize or decline them, especially when they are not medically necessary.

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## induction

**PURPOSE:** Induction is the process of starting labor through human intervention. There are natural ways to try to induce labor, such as sex, massage, and certain foods; and there are medical methods such as breaking the bag of waters, and medications like Pitocin. The pros and cons below refer specifically to medical induction.

**PROS:** Induction at 41 or 42 weeks may decrease the risk of newborn death. All birthing parents should talk to their care provider about how this may or may not apply to them individually.

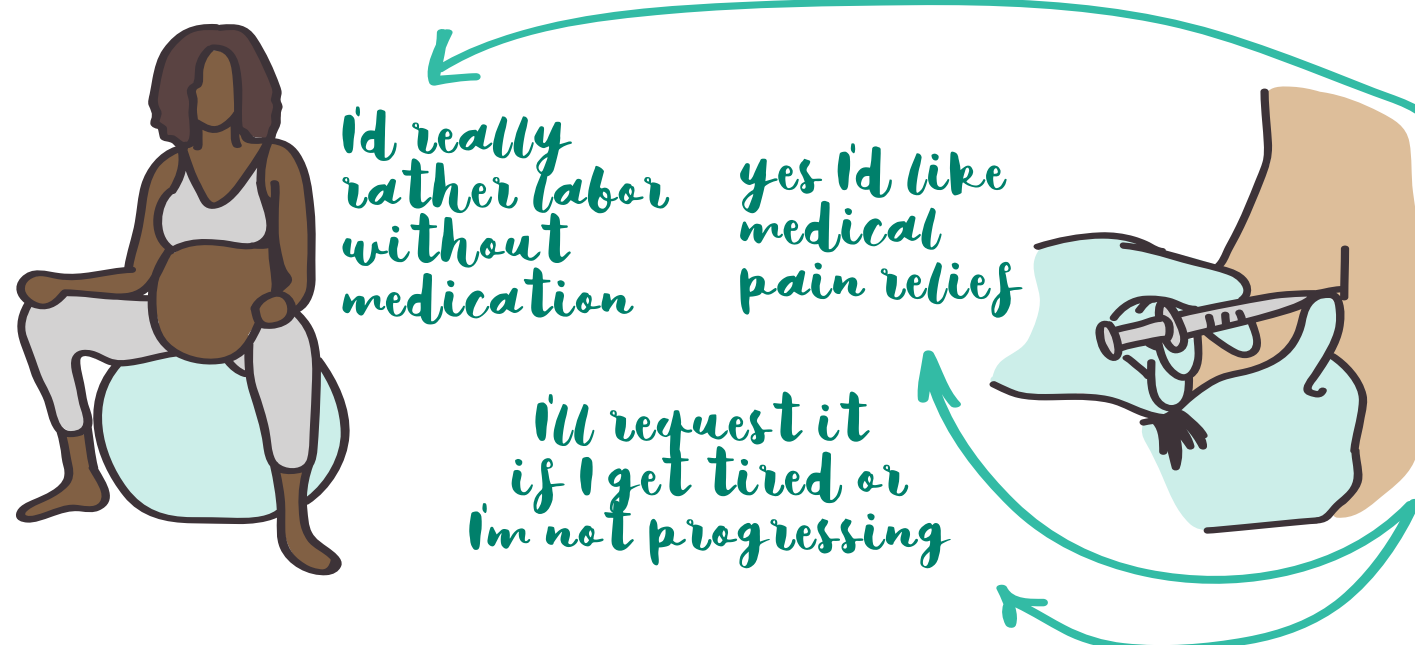
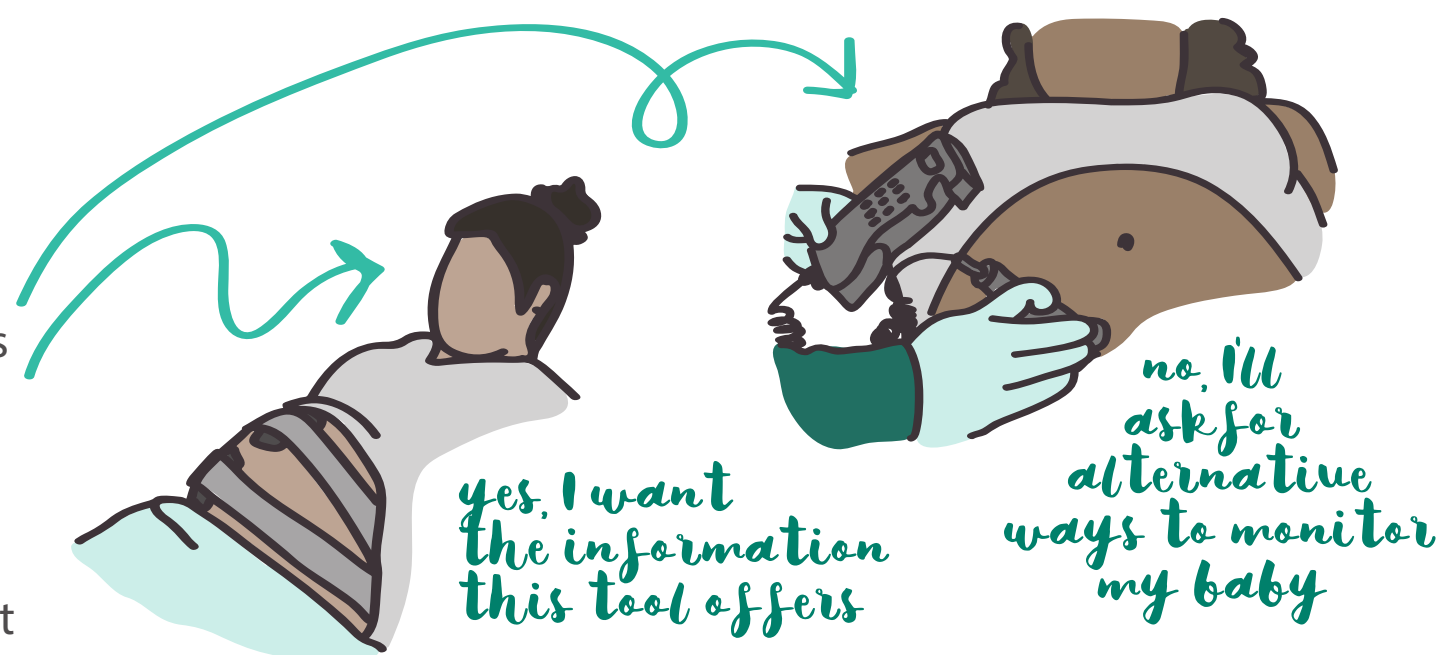
**CONS:** Can increase risk of c-section; induction too early can increase risk of complications for baby, increasing NICU likelihood; can lead to other interventions (ex. epidural).

## electronic fetal monitoring

**PURPOSE:** The electronic fetal monitor is a machine that picks up baby's heartbeat continuously through straps attached around your abdomen. It was devised to detect problems quickly to give hospital staff time to intervene.

**PROS:** Monitors baby's heartbeat and prints a paper readout of that information.

**CONS:** Limits movement; imparts no clear benefit compared to alternative techniques; highly increases risk of c-section.



## epidurals

**PURPOSE:** An epidural is an anesthetic that is injected into the dura space of the spine. It has a numbing effect that relieves pain.

**PROS:** High pain relief satisfaction.

**CONS:** Significant interference with natural hormone balance in birth; can slow labor; can cause fetal distress; can impact the birthing parent's body's ability to properly position baby for vaginal birth; increases need for Pitocin; increases risk of operative delivery (ex. use of forceps/vacuum); increases risk of c-section.