

Peanut Balls Lower Cesarean Rates and Improve Patient Satisfaction Rates



We've compiled everything you need to know about this amazing birth tool in one document!

Peanut balls are the newest labor and delivery tool, and they're being used with great success. Our founder, Cheri Grant, has been a labor and delivery nurse for 50 years, and she knows that the Peanut Ball has made a significant change in maternity care. As the "Peanut Ball Lady," she's spoken throughout the country on the use of Peanut Balls in the last couple years (the AWHONN state convention in 2014 and 2015, the national Lamaze/DONA convention in 2014 and 2019, Gold Perinatal International conference in 2019 and more than 250 hospital in-service trainings), and we'd like to share some information that she's found that nurses need to know:

- **Do you have all four sizes of Peanut Balls on your unit?**
- **Do you know the seven original different positions to use Peanut Balls correctly?**
- **Did you know there are now over 50 peanut Ball Positions?**
- **Do you know how to size Peanut Balls correctly for each patient?**
- **How do you teach others on your unit about a Peanut Ball? How do you get a nurse excited about using the Peanut Ball instead of the side lying stirrup?**
- **What's the evidence-based research on the Peanut Ball?**

About Premier Birth Tools, LLC

Premier Birth Tools, LLC, sells birth tools and other products for Doulas, Clients, Childbirth Educators, Nurses and Midwives. We are committed to equipping birth professionals with excellent resources for their professional needs.

Tiffany Graves

Owner

The owner of Premier Birth Tools, LLC, Tiffany Graves, is a woman committed to bringing birth professionals the premier labor and birth tools they need to succeed. Her vision is to assist birth professionals in giving their clients the best birth possible by providing access to the right tools and educational materials for their proper use.



“My mother is the inspiration of this company. She empowers women with her determination and faith despite her physical obstacles. I have seen many women impacted by her compassionate care in her doula work, teaching, professional speaking and nursing over the years. Her love of birth is contagious, she wants to inspire and share her knowledge, equipment and products with other professionals.”

Cheri Grant RN, ICCE, CLC, ICD, CLD, CD, BDT(DONA)

Founder and Peanut Ball Trainer

The founder, chief contributor and inspiration for Premier Birth Tools, LLC, is Cheri Grant. For more than 50 years she has served women as a labor and delivery nurse, childbirth educator, lactation consultant, national speaker, author, doula trainer and doula. In that time she has helped with more than 2,775 deliveries. Cheri founded DONEOK, a Tulsa Doula community group of doulas that have trained and supported doulas for more 28 years. Recently Childbirth Graphics crowned her “The Peanut Ball Lady!” (Check her out on Facebook: www.facebook.com/peanutballlady)

“I love to help women during the birth of their baby to find their strength to become a wonderful parent. Being able to change maternity care with labor skills, including the Peanut Ball, has been very rewarding. Inspiring and empowering the next generation of doulas and nurses is my passion.”

If you have additional questions after reviewing these materials, we encourage you to contact us at premierbirthtools@gmail.com. Also take a look at our website (www.premierbirthtools.com) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/PremierBirthTools).

Seven Original Peanut Ball Positions

Side lying



Tuck Position



Semi Sitting Lunge



Fire-Hydrant



Forward Leaning



Straddling



Pushing



More information on Peanut Ball positions:

Grant, C. (2020). Peanut Ball Positions. 5 Pictorial Chart.

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<https://premierbirthtools.com/store/peanut-ball-bundle-set-of-5-charts/>

Comparison of the stirrup versus the Peanut Ball



Pelvic outlet not as open



Pelvic outlet more open

Peanut Ball Sizing

After sizing hundreds of clients, I have found after that one size does NOT fit all. Peanut balls come in four different sizes in order to fit different clients, so it's important that all four sizes are available at each hospital.

Here are the recommendations:

- 40cm – Recommended for women who are under 5' 3" petite or shot legs
- 50cm – Recommended for women who are 5'3" to 5'6" Average (Most common size)
- 60cm - Recommended for women who are 5'7" or taller or has long legs
- 70cm - ONLY size to sit on and straddle



Here's an example of how to select the correct Peanut Ball size:



40 cm – Small Clients
Too small for this client



50 cm – Average Clients
Correct size for this client



60 cm – Tall Clients
Too large for this client

Having the wrong size Peanut Ball can cause a few problems:

- Using the incorrect size can cause hip problems.
- If the ball is too large, too much torque is placed in lateral aspect, with abduction of hip joint causing guarding, not relaxing.
- It's very important to not let the ankle hang. This could cause the outlet to close more and pull on the hip.

Different positions may also require a different size - the side lying position may require adjustment such as a 50cm size, the semi sitting position may require a smaller size 40cm size and the fire hydrant position may require a larger size such as 60cm size. One patient may take 3 different peanut ball sizes depending on which position. Engage Baby with Knees at Different Pelvic Stations Internal and external positions such as



-2 station above inlet may require flying cowgirl. Midpelvis and Outlet require a different position check out our internal and external peanut ball positions chart in the set of 5 peanut ball charts. These are wonderful resources. <https://premierbirthtools.com/store/peanut-ball-bundle-set-of-5-charts/>

Tip Sheet on Peanut Balls

Always Choose the Correct Size for your Client

As we discussed above, there are several sizes of Peanut Balls: 40cm, 45cm, 50cm, 55cm, 60cm, and 70 cm. It seems that most hospitals use the 40 cm ball, depending on the part of the country you are from. After interviewing more than 250 hospitals using Peanut Balls across the United States, most carry 40cm and 50cm. However, these hospitals are finding the need for the other two sizes of Peanut balls (60cm and 70cm) in order to support positional needs during labor. Each patient requires a different size of peanut ball.

Always Maintain Safety of the Peanut Ball

The Peanut Ball should be latex free and burst resistant. Research the brand to ensure they are hospital grade, as not all brands are. Physical therapy departments should also have Peanut Balls that are hospital grade. Peanut Balls should be kept away from sharp objects and out of direct sunlight (or above 80 degrees), this can cause deterioration to the material.

It is very important that you measure the Peanut Ball correctly, it's easy to overfill. On the first day, fill the ball to 80% at room temperature. On the second day, fill to the specified measurement on ball. It's important that you make sure read instructions for filling the Peanut Balls carefully. Some brands are measured from the bottom of the floor to the indentation, or waist, of the Peanut Ball. Read your brand's guidelines carefully and DO NOT overinflate. Every three months check the height on the Peanut Ball. A good guideline is: 40cm – 15.5"; 50cm – 19.5"; 60cm – 23.5" and 70 cm – 27.5"

Try Different Positions on the Peanut Ball for you Client

There are fifty different positions in which you can use the Peanut Ball during active, transition and pushing phases along with or without an epidural. It's important to change positions often, about every 30-40 minutes. Engage Baby with Knees at Different Pelvic Stations Internal and external positions

Cover the Ball

There are several different ways to cover the Peanut Ball for use. These options include: a fitted sheet, a patient gown, a commercial ball cover or a waterproof pad over a fitted sheet surrounding the ball. Monitor belts may be used to secure covering over the Peanut Ball.

Cleaning and Storage

- Use soap and water and vinegar.
- Use the Sani Wipes nurses use to clean other items in Labor & Delivery. It is no different than cleaning birthing balls, pillows, or the mattress on the birthing bed. These are the same balls used in Physical therapy.
- If you use the Sani Wipes, they break down the peanut ball eventually. Since balls break down over use, even with soap and water or Sani Wipes; all balls should be replaced, depending on usage, every 1-2 years. They do discolor over time.
- Store off the ground as mentioned earlier. Tips for Nurses has more in-depth information <https://premierbirthtools.com/store/how-to-use-the-peanut-ball/>



Contraindications for Use of the Peanut Ball

Always Know your Contraindications

1. Broken hip
2. Broken Pelvis
3. Broken Symphysis
4. No different than placing pillows or the leg in the stirrup on patient's side. A nurse or doula would also use caution in that position
5. Maintain proper body mechanic especially when used with an epidural and patient is numb
6. If patient states position does not feel good, listen to patient
7. If patient has an active diagnosed DVT – Deep Vein Thrombosis
 - a. Change positions more frequently
 - b. Use caution of the position you choose
8. DO NOT leave patient in same position for more than 45 min to 1 hour
9. Note: no problems have been reported on this, just a concern to be more cautious in positioning
10. Using wrong size of peanut ball on the patient can close the outlet or too large too much torque

Always use the correct size of peanut ball. Each patient requires a different size of peanut ball depending on the peanut ball position used.

Nurse Feedback

- There could be a concern with a previous hip or pelvis injury, such as pubic symphysis distinction.
- Just as with an epidural you must be supportive of limbs when moving them when they are numb and not overextend or twist them.
- Most of the negative feedback I've gotten from nurses is that birth happens quickly and they can't get their charting done quick enough before baby is born!
- No problems have been noted with babies turning in wrong position after a client using a Peanut Ball.



[Peanut Ball Bundle, Set of 5 Charts - Premier Birth Tools](#)

Peanut Ball Research

Originally used in physical therapy, the Peanut Ball has only recently been used for birth support. Not only a tool for comfort, preliminary findings have shown that the use of a Peanut Ball can decrease labor length. In 2011, Tussey and Botsios conducted a research study with birthing women who had an epidural and used a Peanut Ball. Findings revealed a drop in the length of the first stage of labor by more than 90 minutes and second stage was reduced by 22.3 minutes. Additionally, the need for vacuum extraction, forceps and cesarean birth was decreased in the group using the Peanut Ball.

In an unpublished retrospective study in one Midwestern United States hospital (Grant, 2014) (N=218), use and non-use of the Peanut Ball was compared in samples of laboring women who received or did not receive an epidural. Of the patients with an epidural (N=174), 102 used a Peanut Ball and 72 did not. In regards to time, the first stage was decreased by 102 min for those using the Peanut Ball as compared with those who did not (with Peanut Ball averaged 314.6 minutes versus without Peanut Ball averaged 211.9 minute. This is a difference of 102.1 minutes of the first stage). Comparing this study with the Tussey and Botsios (201) findings of a reduction by 90 minutes, this study revealed a comparable reduction of time.

In the same unpublished retrospective study, the second stage of labor also demonstrated a reduction in time with use of the Peanut Ball. Of those with an epidural and no Peanut Ball, the second stage was an average of 49.4 minutes. Those with a Peanut Ball and an epidural averaged 21.8 minutes during the second stage of labor. This demonstrates a reduction of 27.6 minutes for the second stage of labor. Comparing the Tussey and Botsios (2011) findings of a reduction by 22.3 minutes, this study again revealed a comparable reduction of time.

In the same unpublished retrospective study, (Grant, 2014) those without epidural were assessed. Out of the 218 total, 44 had no epidural. Of those, 28 used a Peanut Ball and 16 did not. Those who did not have an epidural and did not use the Peanut Ball had a first stage average of 326.4 minutes compared with a first stage time for those with the Peanut Ball of 217.9 minutes. This demonstrates a reduction of 108.5 minutes for the first stage of labor. Those who did not have an epidural and did not use the Peanut Ball had a second stage average of 41.8 minutes compared with a second stage time for those with the Peanut ball of 12.6 minutes. This demonstrates a reduction of 29.2 minutes for the first stage of labor.

In the level one hospital where this study was conducted, average c-section rates were calculated for the year prior to the introduction of Peanut Ball use and the first year of its use. **The c-section rate decreased by 12%.** The reduction of rate can be attributed to various factors, but the use of the Peanut Ball was a primary change in patient care. There was no significance difference for maternal age, gestational age of fetus, weight of newborn, or augmentation of labor with oxytocin. Discussions on contraindications have concluded that no serious side effects or adverse reactions were ever noted when using the Peanut Ball in any studies.

Examples of using the Peanut Ball include:

Epidural 6 cm Right 24min then left 26min (total 50min) then complete +4 pushed 6 min
Time of Epidural and Peanut ball to be Delivered (56 min), Primip

Epidural 5 cm Right 20 min Left 21 min to complete +1 (total 41 min) pushed 28 min
Time of Epidural and Peanut ball to be Delivered (1hr 9 min), Primip

Epidural 5cm left 55min to complete +2 (Total 55min) pushed 20min
Time of Epidural and Peanut ball to be Delivered (1hr 15 min), Primip

Peanut Ball Research

Lower Cesarean rate

“The Peanut Ball provides an option for reducing the risks associated with primary cesarean surgery and implications for subsequent pregnancies.” Reducing Length of Labor and Cesarean Surgery Rate Using a Peanut Ball for Women Laboring with an Epidural by Tussey, Botsios, Gerkin, Kelly, Gamez, Mensik in *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 24(1), 16–24, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1058-1243.24.1.16>. The real payoff came through lower C-section rates. The C-section rate for the group of women who used the ball was 13 percentage points less than for the group that did not use the Peanut Ball.”

Patient satisfaction

Patient satisfaction was noted with 71% positive feedback from laboring women. “The qualitative findings of this evaluation support use of the Peanut Ball. One-hundred eighteen women responded with positive comments, based on experience using the Peanut Ball. Positive comments included that the Peanut Ball provided comfort, facilitated progress of labor, and helped with position. Psychologically, most women using the Peanut Ball had a positive experience and would recommend use of the Peanut Ball (71%). This positive experience may have included other physiological advantages as well promoting a safer birth experience.” by Payton, Carol L., *Use of the Peanut Ball to Decrease First and Second Stages of Labor* (2015). Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Capstones.

“The Peanut Ball was well received by patients, who expressed satisfaction with a noninvasive, nonpharmacologic intervention that did not cause discomfort and could potentially prevent complications.” Reducing Length of Labor and Cesarean Surgery Rate Using a Peanut Ball for Women Laboring with an Epidural by Tussey, Botsios, Gerkin, Kelly, Gamez, Mensik in *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 24(1), 16–24, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1058-1243.24.1.16>

Decrease in the length of labor

Peanut ball decreased the first stage of labor on average by 90 min and second stage by 23 minutes. Tussey, C. & Botsios, E. (2011).

Decrease the length of labor with the use of a labor ball with patients that receive an epidural. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecological, & Neonatal Nursing*, 40(Supplement s1), S105-S106. DOI: 10.1111/j.1552-6909.2011.01243_25.x

<https://awhonn.confex.com/awhonn/2011/webprogram/Paper6986.html>

The randomization assigned 200 laboring women to either the Peanut Ball (107) or no Peanut Ball being utilized (93). The primary outcome was that the Peanut Ball had a first stage labor time of 258.8 minutes and the control had 341.9 minutes, difference of 90 minutes (0.006). The Peanut Ball group had a 21.3 minute second stage and the control had a 43.5 minute a difference of 22.3 minutes. Conclusion/Implications for nursing practice: The use of the Peanut Ball during labor for patient with an epidural, as compared with standard nursing intervention, did significantly reduce the length of labor, without adverse neonatal outcomes.

Evidence Based References

FREE in-depth Peanut Ball Resource Handout that lists all 28 articles in our store

- Here is the link to download it [Evidence Based Research on Peanut Balls - Premier Birth Tools](#)



Peanut Ball Resources

- Grant, C. B. & Clutter, L. B. (2014) The Peanut Ball: A Remarkable Labor Support Tool. *International Doula*, 22(4), 12-15.
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Video

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Peanut Ball Research

- Reducing Length of Labor and Cesarean Surgery Rate Using a Peanut Ball for Women Laboring with an Epidural by Tussey, Botsios, Gerkin, Kelly, Gamez, Mensik in *The Journal of Perinatal Education*, 24(1), 16–24, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1058-1243.24.1.16>.
- Palladino, Jena, Severi, Erica R., Bowman, Donna, “Nurse-Driven Labor Initiatives to Reduce Cesarean Rates” *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing* JOGNN June 2019 Volume 48, Issue 3, Supplement, Pages S28–S29 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogn.2019.04.048>
- Additional Research in Handout [Evidence Based Research on Peanut Balls - Premier Birth Tools](#)



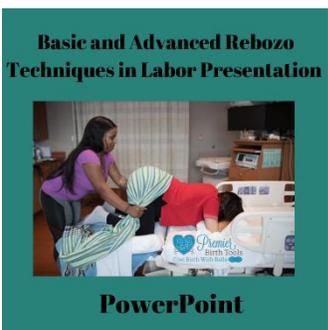
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Available in PowerPoint and PDF Format



Peanut Ball In-Service Training Packages: \$39.99 – \$99.99

<https://premierbirthtools.com/store/peanut-ball-in-service-training-packages/>

Peanut Ball Booklet. Set of 2 Peanut Ball Positions Charts with over 43 Pictures of 19 Positions for the Birthing Bed. Proficiency Check-off List for Nurses and Others that includes: 75 Labor Support Skills and Peanut Balls. Peanut Ball PowerPoint with 72 slides (including all the Research on Peanut Balls). External & Internal Rotation Chart – Determines the External & Internal Rotation of the Hips using the Peanut Ball; Features 19 Pictures of 10 Positions for the Birthing Bed. Set 5 Peanut Ball Positions Charts with over 182 Pictures of 84 Positions for the Birthing Bed. Peanut Ball Video download *Available in Basic, Advanced, Premium and Download Packages*