



## 5 Things Commonly Missing from Decision Matrices for Choosing a Labour Hydrotherapy Pool

Non-trivial decisions involving multiple stakeholders are often made after putting together a decision matrix, whereby the products and vendors being considered can be evaluated. A structured approach usually leads to a better decision. The decision will only be as good as the list of factors to be evaluated. We have put together some of the factors that can get overlooked:

**1 - Product Liability insurance** We are surprised by how often this is overlooked or seen as optional. If there is property damage or injury to a patient or employee - resulting from a manufacturing or design issue with a labour hydrotherapy pool - then a liability policy with the hospital (as a named insured) reduces the risk of financial loss for the hospital. **2 - Custom**

**Designed Specifically for Labour** In the event of a litigation, it may not help the defence if a hospital has chosen to use a large bathtub - re-badged as a labour pool - instead of a pool designed from the ground up to specifically be a labour hydrotherapy pool. The FDA has created a product category for "Water Immersion Labour Pools", adding to the evidence that this

is a specialised product. **3 - Safe Entry and Exit from the Pool** The pool needs to accommodate women of different sizes and height. It is important that the labour/birth pool you choose meets the hospital's criteria for hydrotherapy during labour. Having a step inside and outside of the pool is a good starting point; enabling the safe entry and exit of a pregnant woman. We also feel that a pool deck - that can be gripped while stepping in and out - is important. A wide deck also facilitates a woman sitting, resting or swinging around without standing. We have some hospitals and birth centres which have installed a floor-to-ceiling pole. This provides another option for women to stabilize themselves - by holding something higher than them - as they step

in and out of the pool. **4 - High Availability** When a woman's birth plan includes hydrotherapy for labour pain relief; it is disappointing for them when the pool is not available due to maintenance issues. For example, cable-driven plugs can be vulnerable to failure, and pools with doors add additional mechanical failure points. If the surface of the pool is damaged (due to a

scratch) and needs to be fixed, then this will also prevent their use of the pool as it will have an infection risk. As a result, it is important to think about maintenance. In addition, you should also consider materials, single points of failure, and ease of repair in your matrix. **5 - Cleaning Protocols** It is important to consider certain aspects of cleaning and infection control. Some tubs used in the past were fitted with jets. It is commonly accepted now that this is an infection risk, as cleaning those intricate areas is impossible without the use of harsh chemicals in the water.

Also, there can be other areas in the pool which can harbour germs if not cleaned properly. For this reason, make sure the pool you choose is easy to clean and fits with your hospital's decontamination protocols. **How we help with the above considerations** At Edel Immersys:

We have £5 million product liability insurance to give you peace of mind. When it comes to design, we have worked collaboratively with midwives to design and produce a labour hydrotherapy and birth pool that meets internationally accepted standards.

Our design helps with the entry and exit of women from the pool, by offering them a wide deck and steps to assist their movement. We recommend the floor to ceiling pole discussed earlier.

Our materials also ensure that the pool will be in service very quickly - even if the surface is damaged with a scratch. The FP3 pool is easy to repair in-house, with no special maintenance or service engineers required. Speak to our team for more information.

The FP3 has no areas for harbouring germs, like cable drive waste or handles with rubber seals or jets. The shape and design are very easy to clean, and the pool comes with a single-use plug.

So if you are interested in installing a hydrotherapy pool into your hospital, why not contact our team today?