

When the Baby Arrives Before the Midwife

You've contacted the midwife, but have not yet left for the birth center, or she has not arrived at your home. Suddenly, your partner needs to push. What do you do? First of all, don't panic. Second, know that most births are spontaneous and normal. So relax, and do the following:

- 1) Move her to a comfortable place, if she isn't in one.
- 2) Make sure that the room is warm and draft-free.
- 3) Place a clean underpad under her bottom.
- 4) Make sure you have clean, dry towels or blankets, a hat, and the bulb syringe ready for the baby.
- 5) Wash your hands thoroughly.
- 6) If feces are present from the mother, wipe away with toilet paper or tissues as necessary. This will prevent the baby from coming into contact with feces. Wash your hands again, if necessary.
- 7) Ask the mother to pant as the head crowns and is born. This is to make sure that the baby births slowly, and helps prevent tearing.
- 8) When the head is out, slide your fingers around the baby's neck to feel for the umbilical cord. If it is there, try slipping it over the baby's head. If you can't, it's usually not a problem to leave it.
- 9) The baby is born! The baby will be slippery. **DON'T DROP IT.** Lift the baby to the mother's belly. Dry the baby off. Cover the baby with clean, dry blankets.
- 10) Gently wipe the baby's face with a clean, soft cloth. Use the bulb syringe to suction the baby's mouth, if necessary. First, squeeze the air out of the syringe. While keeping the bulb squeezed, place the tip in the side of the baby's mouth and release. Repeat, if the baby is still struggling with mucous.
- 11) Replace wet blankets with dry ones, and put a hat on the baby's head.
- 12) You don't need to cut the cord. The baby should be pink and have good muscle tone.

If the baby is bluish, white or limp and not crying, do the following:

- a. Run your fingers up the baby's spine, massaging vigorously.
- b. Flick baby's feet with your fingers.
- c. Having mother talk to the baby, continue the above.
- d. Keep the baby warm and dry.

If the baby is still not responding, and it has been one minute since birth, begin mouth-to-mouth with gentle puffs from your cheeks, covering baby's mouth and nose with your mouth. Keep baby warm and dry, and have someone call 911.

If the mother starts to bleed heavily, massage her uterus vigorously from the outside. If she continues to bleed heavily, do the following:

- a. Call 911 and tell them you have a mother hemorrhaging.
- b. Make sure that she is lying flat on her back, and elevate her feet at least 12 inches above her heart.
- c. Do, or have her do, aggressive nipple stimulation.
- d. Make her talk to you constantly, while you keep massaging her uterus.
- e. Cover her. Make sure she is warm, but not too hot.
- f. If nothing helps, and she continues to bleed heavily, squeeze the abdomen with both hands firmly, thereby compressing the uterus between your hands. This will be very painful to the mother. Don't let go until the bleeding stops.

Notice: these instructions are in no way implying that individuals should deliver a baby without competent midwifery or medical help. The foregoing instructions are only for EMERGENCY childbirth, and are general instructions only. There are variations in the birth process. We cannot offer instructions for every possible variation in birth. **THESE ARE GENERAL EMERGENCY CHILDBIRTH INSTRUCTIONS ONLY.**