

SECOND STAGE, CROWNING, BIRTH

Pushing is instinctive and often uncontrollable. It is best to wait until the urge is overwhelming and then go with it. Sometimes women push too much in their throat. They need to focus the pushing 'downwards', just like when they move their bowels. Pushing can be hard work! Look at these women's faces! You may need to try lots of different positions to help get the baby 'around the curve'.

1. Pushing on a birth stool. Note: Ten year old daughter on bottom right is holding the flashlight and just can't get close enough to the action!
Obstetrician's head in the centre, near the floor, next to the daughter. Father's head to the left. Mum's best friend on the far left. She is surrounded by those who she loves and feels safe with as she gives birth.
2. Pushing on the toilet with help to hold her legs up. The toilet makes an excellent birth stool. (The higher the knees - the more open the pelvis.) Once the baby is 'around the curve' she gets off the toilet.
3. Pushing in a supported squat. A powerful and easy position. This woman is 'yelling' her baby out. (If you look closely, you can see that in fact it is the bag of waters).
4. Pushing on all fours on the hospital bed. The obstetrician is crouching on the floor, waiting to 'catch' the baby. The midwife holds a flashlight. The father can see signs of the baby's head appearing in the mirror.
5. Pushing on her side - some women choose to lie on their side, or perhaps their legs are too shaky, weak or sore for any other position. Looking in the mirror helps the woman to be more in control during the intense crowning sensations. Her partner holds her foot so that her knee is well bent to open her pelvis.
6. Pushing in the bath. This baby will be born in the water. Looking at the baby's crowning in a mirror helps this woman to gently, slowly 'breathe' the baby out. No pushing at this stage - just blowing or panting, to help reduce the need for stitches. (This mother did not need any).
7. Pushing in the bath until crowning. (A home birth with a young single mother.)
8. Then 'blowing' as baby's head is born. Baby's head is under the water in the woman's hand.
9. Crowning - forehead is being born. It is very important that she blows/pants at this stage. A warm, wet face-washer on the perineum helps with the strong stinging sensation. The woman

is on all fours on a birthing suite floor. Many women instinctively give birth on all fours.

10. The woman's own hand is on her vulva and then on the baby's head as it is born, which helps her to be more in control. Mother is on all fours. Amniotic fluid is dripping from baby's face. The anus bulges as the baby is born - this is normal. The father's hand is waiting to 'catch' the baby.
Note: The bloody show on the white face washer (a sign of progress).
11. In the previous photo the baby's face is facing forward. In this photo see how the head has turned sideways to get the shoulders out. This father is going to 'catch' the baby.
12. The midwife helped gently as the shoulders came out and now the father is 'catching' the rest of the baby as it is born. It is very exciting for fathers to help their children be born.
Notice the colour of the baby - (it will 'pink up' once it breathes) plus note the moulding of baby's head.
13. The baby is just born (mum is side-lying) and the father helped 'catch' the baby. See his ecstatic face as he passes the baby to the mother.
14. The baby is just born. The cord is still intact and the mother is on all fours on the floor leaning on father's lap.
Note: round mirror on floor so father could watch the birth. The father is sitting on the hospital bed, moved to tears, and the obstetrician is 'catching' (or 'receiving') the baby. (Pizzas are 'delivered', babies are 'born'.)
15. A baby born at home with mother lying on her side.
Note: the baby is posterior - facing forward - 'face to pubes'. The midwife is 'catching' the baby and the mother is touching the baby as it is being born.
16. This baby came too fast for the woman to get out of the tub so it was born ABOVE the water in a semi-squat. This baby weighed 11 lb 12 oz and it was an easy birth!

JUST BORN

17. When all is well, it is important not to disturb the first contact between mother and baby. Often parents just look at their baby in awe and amazement before actually picking them up.
18. The mother gave birth standing next to the toilet and then sat back on the toilet just after. Look at the ecstatic face of this mother, and the father is crying in joy - dads often cry at births.
19. Mothers will gaze into their babies' faces in delight and wonder. Notice the curly umbilical cord. If all is well, there is no need to rush to cut the cord yet.
20. When she at last looks up, after all the hard work, the mother's face is beaming! (Note meconium on mother's leg and moulding on the baby's head).
21. Mothers are literally RADIANT after giving birth.
22. Extra endorphins are released when the baby is born, giving a sense of elation and wonder.
23. Another radiant mother.
24. Both parents are radiant!
25. The look in this father's eyes shows that he, too, has been through an incredible life transforming event!
26. Moments after the birth, these parents are both 'blown away'!
27. The first time mother and baby look into each other's eyes is indescribable.

Note: This mother is 41. It is her first child and it is an IVF baby. She had a four hour natural labour.
28. Magical moment of first eye contact. Baby had been born into the water. The umbilical cord is still attached as the baby looks into his delighted mother's eyes.
29. Newborn babies are very alert and look intensely into their mother's face and at mother's breast. This baby is 20 minutes old.
30. Remember to smell your newborn baby. They smell divine! (Note the head moulding).
31. Fathers - take your shirt off before the birth. The first time you hold baby will be skin to skin.
This baby has just been born into his father's loving hands.
Mother is on all fours taking a breather before turning over to hold her baby.
This was a very special moment for father and son. (Fathers don't need to wear gloves for the birth - he just put them on because the midwife offered them.)
32. Soon after the birth. Father tenderly holds his newborn baby for the first time.
Note: the vernix.
33. Father kissing his newborn baby. The cord is still attached. See how pink baby is soon after the birth. Socks keep the baby's feet warm. Dad's warm chest beneath and a blanket on top keep baby warm enough.
34. Up in the nursery. This father has taken off his shirt to cuddle his baby. (The blanket was removed for the photo.)

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Thank you for your support in this, Best wishes, Lina Clerke