

## **THIRD STAGE (physiological)**

1. Baby just born - expressing colostrum and rubbing on baby's mouth helps get contractions going to expel the placenta.
2. Only 15 minutes after the birth mother is walking back from the bathroom where baby was born. The baby is still attached via the cord and the doting grandmother carries the baby. Mother has a towel between her legs for blood loss. As long as the cord is still attached, the baby can only go as far away from mother as the length of the cord! (This is a very good reason for keeping the cord attached as long as possible!)
3. Baby sucking helps expel the placenta. Beaming mother sitting on a bedpan waiting for the placenta to come out. Notice the pink colour of the baby. Baby is stretching out his leg for the first time since birth.
4. This beaming new mother is on a birth stool, baby is suckling. There is no rush as she enjoys her new baby and waits for the placenta to fall into the waiting bedpan.
5. The placenta just born into a kidney dish fifteen minutes after the birth. Hat to keep baby's head warm.
6. Some mothers choose not to cut the cord until after the baby has a good breastfeed. (Then baby gets the message that nutrients will come now from the breast, so they no longer need the placenta and it is safe to let go of it now after so many months together in the womb.)
7. Some mothers choose to cut the cord after it stops pulsating, or as soon as the placenta is born. Who will cut it? Decide ahead of time. In this photo her ten year old son is cutting it.  
Note: It is tough, like calamari.  
Note: you will need to discuss ahead of time with your caregivers if you prefer a natural third stage. If all is well, it is your choice.
8. Good example of life-sized, healthy placenta.
9. Children at the birth. Both little girls at this homebirth are very interested. Children are fine at births, as long as the partners and support people are relaxed and unflustered.
10. A little sibling in the bath with the new baby. The placenta is not out yet. The baby was born next to the bath then the whole family got back into the bath together. Father enjoys floating his newborn in the warm water.

## **BREASTFEEDING**

Note: Babies don't always want to feed immediately after birth. They usually like to smell and touch and nuzzle the breast though while they lie peacefully in their mother's arms. The World Health Organisation recommends getting the baby on the breast within the first half hour or so, to ensure optimum breastfeeding success.

11. The face of a baby who wants to feed - NOW! (The 'rooting' look).
12. "Ah, yes, that's what I wanted!"
13. New mother offering baby the breast moments after the birth. The cord is still attached - notice how 'curly' it is.
14. Mother resting on her side. Note the 'Special K' mouth and a new baby's pink colour. They are not born pink, but they 'pink up' naturally after breathing for a while.
15. 'Football'/underarm hold. Good for large breasts, post caesarean, sore belly etc.
16. Feeding in the bath - a gentle way to encourage good attachment. Takes the baby 'back into the womb'. Very soothing for both mother and baby.
17. After a caesarean extra help is needed to ensure correct attachment of the baby. (Note the 'football hold' position).
18. Babies will suck on whatever is offered!
19. Small babies may need extra persistence and help with sucking. This newborn (full term) baby weighs 5 lbs. Notice the mother's gentle holding of baby's head at the occiput, rather than holding the whole head in her hand (which babies do not like).
20. Sometimes, for various reasons, colostrum must be expressed into a syringe and dripped into the baby's mouth as she sucks a finger.

## **BABIES**

21. Head moulding. Babies' heads come out in all shapes and sizes. Do not worry! This baby's head changes to normal within a few hours.
22. The same baby after two hours. The cord has been cut far away - you can see the stainless steel clamp and the plastic cord clamp. The cord will be re-cut later at the belly button. (Notice hands and feet are still a bit purple - this is fine).
23. Top: head shape after caesarean birth - no moulding in this case. Bottom: after forceps -

see the bruising and red marks from the forceps. The baby is sucking his thumb (he would have been doing so in the womb).

24. Remember it is about having a baby - they are BEAUTIFUL little people. Big bright eyes and tiny hands and large heads - a look designed to make parents want to look after them.

#### **PROCEDURES AFTER THE BIRTH**

25. Weighing - they don't like it - its cold! Note the cord clamp. Note the large vulva, name tags and crinkly paper on the scales. There is no need to weigh for several hours.
26. No need to measure immediately. Wait until they stretch out on their own, they have been curled up for so many months. At the Melbourne Royal Women's Hospital they measure after 48 hours. (But this pink baby is less than one hour old.)
27. There is no need to bathe the baby after the birth. They are as 'clean' as they'll ever be! Better to wait at least four hours. This father is bathing his baby for the first time, several hours after birth, in a portable tub. Note this is a big 11 lb 12 oz newborn, born naturally
28. Sometimes babies are born slightly 'floppy'. Flicking their feet and rubbing their back to 'get them going' often works. Note the newborn colour - not pink but this is normal). The baby has just been born in the bath.
29. Sometimes a baby must be suctioned away from the mother. Father stays very close and talks in his familiar voice to soothe the baby.
30. Oxygen bag and mask. If you look closely you can see that this baby is holding the mask to her own face!

31. Shielding the baby's eyes from light if he needs to be at the paediatrician's cot. (Note the vernix and large scrotum.)
32. If baby needs to be in a humidicrib for a while, gently shake the crib to settle baby. Talk to baby and put your hands in to hold baby if possible, as this father is doing after a caesarian birth.
33. Bubble wrap is sometimes used to keep babies warm - twins are kept together.
34. If the baby is really unwell it will be in a special mobile NETS intensive care incubator unit. This baby needs surgery and is being transferred to the Royal Children's Hospital.
35. Three hours after giving birth, this mother is having a nice, warm shower. Notice how the 'pregnant belly' does not mysteriously shrink and disappear once the baby is born.
36. Three hours after birth, this baby girl has just had her first bowel movement (all over her delighted father's lap). This is a good sign - it means that her digestive tract is in good working order. From now on her bowel movements will look very different and be easier to clean up!
37. Welcoming the new baby - grandparents and extended family celebrating.
38. There are many cultural customs and traditions - this is an Indigenous Australian baby sleeping under an ancestral kangaroo skin blanket at two hours old. Parents should feel free to bring and use familiar, special and cultural items.
39. Seven days old and the cord stump is still there.
40. Back at home. Babies LOVE to sleep on their father's or mother's chest.

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