

## 4.7 Journal

There are many steps that need to happen in order for a baby to be born. List all the steps that you know of that take place during childbirth.

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

And so on...

## Objectives

- Identify the three stages of the birth process.
- Describe four complicating factors that may arise at birth.

## The Birth Process

- **Certified Nurse-Midwife** - a nurse who is trained to deliver babies
  - Can deliver babies at a person's home or in hospital setting
- **Gestational period** - time from conception to birth
  - Normal is 40 weeks (ranges from 37-42)
- Birth takes place in 3 stages
  - Labor
  - Delivery of the baby
  - Delivery of the afterbirth

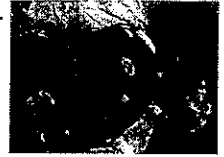


## 1. Labor

- The work performed by the mother's body to push the fetus out
- May last 2-24 hours or longer
- Strong contractions of the muscles of the uterus cause cervix to increase in width (dilate)
- Near end of this stage:
  - Amniotic sac breaks ("water" breaks)
  - Cervix becomes softer and wide enough for the fetus to pass through (10 cm)

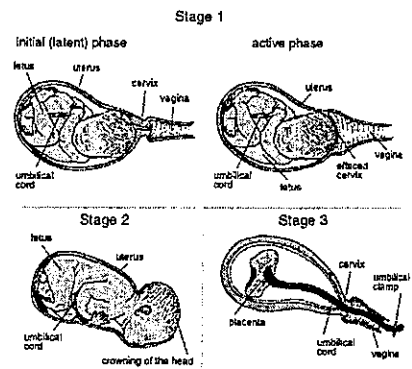
## 2. Delivery of the Baby

- This stage can last from 30 minutes to over 2 hours
- Contractions continue; baby is pushed out through cervix and vagina
- After baby is out:
  - Doctor clamps and cuts umbilical cord
  - Baby's nose and mouth are suctioned
  - Eye drops are put in eyes to prevent infection
  - Injection of Vitamin K given



## 3. Delivery of the Afterbirth

- Uterus continues to contract and mother needs to push out placenta, also called the afterbirth
- This takes 5-30 minutes

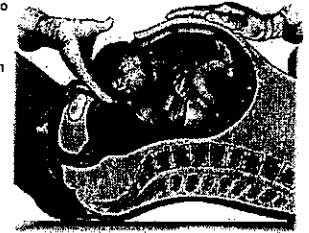


## The Postpartum Period

- First 6 weeks after baby is born
- Changes to baby:
  - Lungs begin to function
  - Circulatory system & heart undergo changes
  - Nervous system reacts to new sensations
- Changes to mother:
  - Hormones signal breasts to produce milk and for uterus to shrink
  - Hormonal changes and fatigue may lead to overwhelmed or sad feeling called "baby blues"
  - If sadness lasts longer than a few days and mother begins to withdraw from others, she may need to be treated for "postpartum depression"

## Complications at Birth - Surgical Delivery

- **Cesarean Section (C-Section)** - a surgical method of birth
  - Doctor makes an incision in lower abdomen into the uterus
  - Doctor removes baby and placenta
  - Over 30% U.S. babies are delivered by cesarean
    - More than double what WHO recommends
- **Common causes:**
  - Position of fetus
  - Failure to progress
  - Fetal distress
  - Repeat cesarean



## Complications at Birth - Premature Birth

- Delivery of a live baby before the 37th week of pregnancy
- The earlier the birth, the more problems the baby tends to have
- Lungs usually not fully developed
- Baby usually receives care in an incubator



## Complications at Birth - Low Birthweight

- A newborn that weighs less than 5.5 pounds at birth
- Premature and low birthweight babies face increased risk of health problems as newborns, chronic lifelong health problems or even death
- Number of premature and low birthweight babies decreases when mothers develop healthy habits
  - For example - a woman reduces her risk of having a baby with low birth weight by about 40% by not smoking during pregnancy

## Multiple Births

- Delivery of more than 1 baby (twins, triplets, quadruplets, etc.)
- **Identical Twins** - Develop from a single fertilized egg
  - Early in development the embryo divides
  - Twins will inherit same traits and are the same sex
- **Fraternal Twins** - Two separate eggs and sperm
  - No more alike than any other sibling; may not be same sex
- Triplets or more
  - Less common than twins
  - Number of multiple births has dramatically increased in last 30 years because of medical interventions with fertility treatments

