

# Birth Care & Family Health Services

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## If Baby Arrives Before The Midwife...

You called your midwife and she's on the way. Suddenly your wife says "the baby is coming" or starts involuntarily pushing with her contractions. **Don't panic - stay calm!!** Know that **most births are spontaneous, uncomplicated and normal.** So, **try to relax**, and do the following:

Make sure mom is comfortable. Help her choose a position which will allow for a gradual birth... semi-sitting, lying on her side or on hands and knees. We do not recommend squatting if you are unattended and the baby is coming quickly. Try to make sure the room is warm and draft-free for the baby.

The attendant should (if possible) wash hands before the birth. Gloves are not necessary if you have clean hands and are part of the baby's family.

As the head starts emerging, put gentle pressure against the baby's head to keep it from "popping out" too quickly. Remind the mother to go slow now. Instead help her to pant or blow with her contractions to allow for a gentler, slower delivery of the head. When the head is out, tell your wife to stop pushing and to take some deep breaths (you too!) If the bag of water is covering the baby's face, pull it back over the head to allow the fluids to drain out of baby's mouth. Slide your fingers in along baby's neck beside the ear to feel for the umbilical cord. If there is a cord and it is loose, pull it out and slip it over the baby's head. If it is too tight, do NOT pull on it. Just leave it as baby will deliver through the cord, at which point you can unwrap baby's neck.

The baby's head will usually turn to one side on its own after the birth of the head. Stay calm and be patient... a blue or purple color is normal. Baby's body will usually come out with the first contraction after the head has turned. With the next pain, have your wife gently push the baby out into your hands. Catch the baby with one hand supporting the head and one hand holding a leg. If baby does not come, have mom squat and push hard. Do NOT pull on baby's head! For babies that are coming this quickly, however, usually they slide right out easily.

Lift baby immediately up into mother's arms to hold at her breast, skin-to-skin for warmth. Wipe the baby's face with a clean cloth. If the baby sounds bubbly from mucus, rest baby's head lower than the body to let the fluids drain out. If baby remains limp and doesn't breathe right away, firmly rub the baby's back or slap the bottom of the baby's feet. You can also try to blow hard into the baby's face from about 5 inches away; sometimes this surprises baby into a breath. Continue to rub the baby and talk to him or her. Once the baby has cried, cover your little one as baby lies against mom and relax! Don't pull on the cord or cut it. Just wait, leaving it alone. Encourage breastfeeding as soon as possible.

Usually the midwife will arrive before the placenta. But if there is a gush of blood and mom feels the need to push something out, she may go ahead and do so. Sometimes squatting helps most. There is no need to cut the cord, just keep baby and placenta connected together until the midwife arrives.

Keep baby warm, catch your breath and be proud of yourselves. **Congratulations!!!**

*Most babies, especially those born quickly and easily, will never need this step but we want to be sure parents understand life-saving techniques...* If baby still does not cry after a minute, put your mouth over baby's mouth and nose and gently puff air into the lungs -- just a gentle, little bit, to see the chest rise slowly. Better too little than too much. You can also try to hold the baby upside down, but be sure you have a good grip on both feet. Continue to rub and breathe for a baby as long as it takes for help to arrive, do NOT give up.