

Serenity Birthing – Your Birth and Beyond, The Way that Resonates With You



Module 5 – Moving Through Labour



Module 5 – Moving through labour

- ♥ What is the latent phase and what might I feel?
- ♥ What is active labour and what might I feel?
- ♥ What is transition and what might I feel?
- ♥ What is happening during the second stage of labour?
- ♥ What is happening in the third stage of labour?
- ♥ What can I do in these stages?



The Stages of Labour – Latent Phase and Early Labour

The latent phase - moving, softening and dilation of your cervix:

The cervix begins to move forward and soften – Effacement and thinning

The mucus plug inside the cervix may come away together with some blood – bloody show

The membranes around the baby may release – waters breaking or spontaneous rupture of membranes

The uterine muscles will contract regularly in order to pull the cervix open and begin to move the baby down

Contractions may be irregular and may feel like a tightening – your uterus is warming up for ready for the work of labour



The latent Phase and Early Labour – What should I do?

- ♥ This phase can take a while so distract yourself, rest, stay at home (you won't be considered in labour by midwives until you are 3-4cm dilated)
- ♥ It is best to stay away from hospital and do things that make you feel relaxed
- ♥ Try to ignore your contractions and busy yourself with other things like watching a film, seeing friends, maybe baking a cake or doing a puzzle
- ♥ Build that oxytocin by laughing, cuddling, massage, relaxation techniques
- ♥ Check in with your Doula and make sure your bags are packed
- ♥ Remember to eat and drink regularly



The Stages of Labour – Active Labour

The 1st stage – This is established labour

Body injects adrenaline to signal moving into established labour usually around 5cm dilation

Slightly up-hill at this point due to decrease in endorphins (mini transition)

Your body goes into 'auto pilot' and you're in the flow

Your cervix is now dilating from 5cm-10cm

Contractions are 4-5 in a 10 minute period and feel more intense – you may no longer be able to speak during them as you are focusing and heading for planet birth



Active Labour – What should I do?

- 💖 Movement and upright positions are usually helpful in this stage to help the baby descend into the pelvis and open the cervix fully
- 💖 You may find being in water comfortable
- 💖 Massage or moving your pelvis in a slow dance might feel good
- 💖 You will know if/when you want to go to the hospital
- 💖 Remember your snacks and sips of water between contractions

💖 Relaxation

💖 Rhythm

💖 Ritual



Transition – What to expect

This is the last part of your cervix dilating and it can feel pretty intense as you get a spike of adrenaline to mark the change to the “pushing stage” and the contractions are close together and strongly opening the last bit

Many people feel sick and shaky and like they can't do it or want to go home

Now you know what to expect, you know your baby is really ready to start being born – You can think to yourself “oh that was transition, we get to meet this baby very soon!”



The Stages of Labour – Stage 2

The 2nd stage – The birth of your baby

The cervix is now fully open to allow the baby to descend through the pelvis and vagina – that nature of the contractions changes, you may feel an overwhelming urge to bear down or pressure in your bottom

The pelvic floor and vagina stretch to allow the baby out – as the baby descends, the tissues accommodate the movement which is often one step forward, one step back

As the baby descends they will turn in your pelvis to find the best way out. You may feel stretching sensations.

The baby's head and body are born – breathe your baby out rather than “pushing”

Sometimes there is a small bowel movement – it's a good sign the baby is nearly here!



Stage 2 – What should I do?

- ♥ Forward leaning and upright positions are usually helpful in this stage to help the baby descend into the pelvis
- ♥ You may find being in water comfortable or a warm compress on your perineum
- ♥ Massage or pressure on your pelvis may feel good, not being touched may also feel right
- ♥ Deep sounds and relaxing your jaw can help relax your pelvic floor
- ♥ Try to breathe your baby out and let your body guide your pushing
- ♥ Listen to your midwife who can guide you to breathe/blow at appropriate moments

♥ Relaxation

♥ Rhythm

♥ Ritual



Congratulations you have birthed your baby!



After your birth – What to expect

- 🌈 Your baby may look a little blue – don't worry this is completely normal. The pink will spread as they take their first breaths
- 🌈 Your baby may have vernix on their skin – a white waxy substance that has protected them in your uterus. It will absorb and is good to keep their skin moisturised
- 🌈 The baby's head may be slightly cone shaped from squeezing through your pelvis. This will settle
- 🌈 Your baby's hands and feet may be cold as their blood is central, circulating to their vital organs



Skin to Skin is AMAZING!

- 💖 The best place for your baby is on you immediately after they are born. On your abdomen or your chest. Spend as long as you want like this – things like weighing and measuring can wait!
- 💖 Being on you will help to regulate your baby's breathing, heart rate, temperature, blood sugar and help establish breastfeeding natural reflexes in the baby and the right hormones in you



The Golden Hour

In the first hour after your baby is born:

- ♥ Their sense of smell is much higher than it will ever be again
- ♥ Their immune system will benefit from touching you skin to skin
- ♥ Your baby will feel safer and calmer and more settled being in contact with you – you are their home, their safe place

Keep them there as LONG as you want



The Stages of labour – Stage 3

The 3rd stage - The birth of the placenta and membranes

Delayed cord clamping is more beneficial for your baby. It is best to leave the cord until it has stopped pulsating (usually after 3mins or more)

The uterus will contract and the placenta will detach from the uterine wall

The uterus will pull itself back down to limit blood loss from the site of the placenta



The 3rd stage – Your Options

- ♥ A physiological 3rd stage – The placenta is birthed with your natural hormones
- ♥ A managed 3rd stage – The placenta is birthed with the aid of drugs
- ♥ A lotus birth – The placenta is naturally birthed and remains attached to the baby via the cord until it naturally comes away



Managed 3rd stage – what to expect

- ♥ Injection of syntocinon or syntometrine in mother's thigh as the baby's shoulders are born – baby skin-to-skin
- ♥ Cord clamped and cut immediately – it can be slightly delayed but don't want the drugs to cross the placenta
- ♥ Your midwife will put her hand on your tummy to check that the placenta has come away from the uterus wall
- ♥ Your midwife will pull on the cord to get placenta out
- ♥ Needs to happen within 7 minutes or your cervix will close trapping the placenta



Managed 3rd stage – pros and cons

- ♥ Some research suggests that women are less likely to have heavy blood loss immediately after the placenta has arrived
- ♥ Some women think that postnatal bleeding goes on longer
- ♥ Syntometrine has side effects which can include nausea, vomiting and headache
- ♥ Syntocinon has been associated with lower breastfeeding rates
- ♥ Cutting the cord early means less blood transfers to your baby and the extra oxygenated blood supply is cut off just as they are taking their first breaths



Physiological 3rd Stage – What to expect

- ♥ Your baby is placed on your skin to skin
- ♥ The room should be kept warm and quiet and you should not be disturbed as you are getting to know one another
- ♥ The cord is left until it stops pulsating – you choose who cuts it
- ♥ The mother remains in an upright position once the cord is clamped
- ♥ You can birth the placenta with a mild contraction
- ♥ It may take an hour or more for the placenta to be delivered
- ♥ Oxytocin can increase the contractions to help birth the placenta via nipple stimulation e.g. the baby feeding



Physiological 3rd stage – pros and cons

- ♥ Your baby gets the blood from the placenta and cord ensuring good iron stores and enough blood to easily fill the vessels around the lungs making it easier to take their first breaths
- ♥ Some women think that postnatal bleed stops sooner after a natural third stage
- ♥ Some research suggests that women are slightly more likely to have a heavier blood loss immediately after the birth
- ♥ No interference with your natural hormone production



Lotus Birth – What to expect

- ♥ The umbilical cord is left uncut
- ♥ Your baby remains attached to the placenta until the cord naturally separates at the navel
- ♥ The cord usually separates 3-10 days after birth
- ♥ (Originates in California through Clair Lotus Day in the 1970s)



Lotus Birth – Pros and Cons

- 💖 A spiritual transition of birth to separation from the mother, allowing the baby to slowly and gently let go of their attachment to their mother's body
All the benefits of optimal cord clamping
- 💖 The placenta is particularly prone to infection as it contains blood (RCOG)
- 💖 You have to carry the placenta around as well as the baby



Vitamin K – know your options

- 💖 Vitamin K is offered to all babies as either an injection or oral drops. You can choose either or none
- 💖 It helps to prevent a very rare blood disorder called haemorrhagic disease of the newborn
- 💖 It is more important in augmented or assisted births



Medical checks – what to expect

💖 The midwife will do an APGAR check of your baby immediately after they are born and then again at a few intervals. It just involves them observing your baby for certain signs and you most likely won't even notice

💖 The midwife will want to do a vaginal exam after your birth to check for any cuts, grazes or tears in case they feel they might need stitching



Practical Exercise

- ♥ Take some time to consider what feels right and what feels important for you during your labour so that you can write your birth preferences/care plan
- ♥ Do your research, feel fully informed before making decisions about your labour, the third stage, vitamin K. Only you know what is right for you and your family
- ♥ Remember to give yourself time and space to reflect, without judgement. Allow time to discuss with your companion or doula and if you wish, with your midwife
- ♥ Take time to add to your diary, note down any thoughts or questions that have come up in this module

