

BIRTH OF PLACENTA [3RD STAGE]

The placenta develops along with your baby in the womb. It provides nourishment and oxygen to your baby during the pregnancy and is connected by the umbilical cord. The average placenta weighs about 500grams. The placenta must be born to complete the birth. After the cord is cut the midwife will continue to assist with the birth of the placenta. This is also called the 3rd stage of labour.

ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF 3RD STAGE

This is when an injection of syntocinon is given [either into a muscle or into the vein] and then traction is put on the cord while the uterus is guarded. The midwife puts downward pressure on the cord, gently pulling to facilitate the birth of the placenta. This will most likely take up to 15 minutes.

PHYSIOLOGICAL BIRTH OF PLACENTA

This is when no intervention is needed. If the birth has occurred naturally, the midwife watches and waits until the mother experiences a contraction and the urge to push, then the placenta is born. This may take up to an hour. Upright positions may help or sitting on the toilet to pass urine may also help to birth the placenta.

AFTER THE PLACENTA IS OUT

The midwife will rub the top of your abdomen to make sure the uterus is well contracted, to stop bleeding. The placenta will be examined to make sure it is all there and no parts are missing. The midwife will examine your perineum to check to see if need any stitches. The midwife or doctor will do any stitches if needed and you should be offered some tablets for pain relief.

DELAYED CORD CLAMPING

When the cord is clamped no earlier than one minute after the birth of the baby and between one and three minutes after birth it is called delayed cord clamping. It is recommended for improved health and nutritional outcomes [WHO]. This is not recommended if the baby needs immediate resuscitation. You can request delayed cord clamping by asking your midwife or putting in your Birth Plan or Preferences.

AFTER THE BIRTH IS COMPLETE

The midwife will continue to observe you and your baby in the birth suite until you go to the postnatal ward. The midwife will check your bleeding & blood pressure, and will check your baby's transition to being born, breathing, heartrate, temperature and the first feed..

YOUR PLACENTA

You can ask to see your placenta; the midwife should show you the different parts and what they are looking for when they examine it. You can leave it with them and they will dispose of it or you can take your placenta home if you want to bury it and plant a tree on it, or you can make a placenta print - you just need to ask your midwife and sign some paperwork. You may also need to have a container to take it home in.

PLACENTA SKILLS

It contains a hormone that stops production of breastmilk, once the placenta is born milk is produced.

Towards the end of pregnancy, antibodies are passed to the baby providing protection for up to six months.

It is the only disposable organ, once finished doing it's job it is no longer needed.

<https://parentsguidecordblood.org/en/news/10-amazing-facts-about-placenta>

THINGS TO CONSIDER

If your labour occurs naturally and you don't need any interventions you could ask for physiological third stage.

For improved health outcomes for you and your baby consider requesting delayed cord clamping.

If active management of third stage is recommended make sure you understand why and what will happen.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Can I have a physiological birth of placenta?

What would mean I could not have a physiological birth of placenta?

What if I bleed too much and the placenta is not out yet?

Can I have delayed cord clamping?

RESOURCES

<https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/giving-birth-third-stage-of-labour>

<https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/labour-birth/stages-of-labour>

https://www.cochrane.org/CD007412/PREG_delivering-placenta-third-stage-labour

<https://sarahbuckley.com/leaving-well-alone-a-natural-approach-to-the-third-stage-of-labour/>

<https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/what-is-the-placenta>

https://www.who.int/elena/titles/full_recommendations/cord_clamping/en/

DISCLAIMER

This information is not intended to be medical advice, it is a guide only. Please ask your midwife or doctor for information and advice directly related to your care and your baby's care.