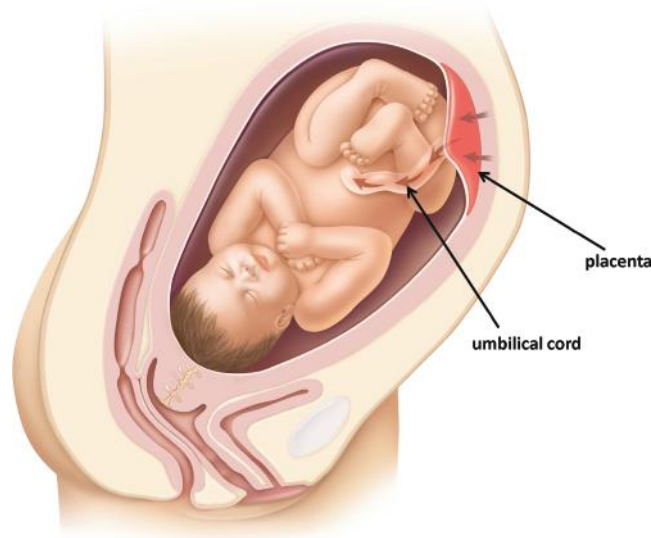


Umbilical Cord Clamping After Birth



What is the umbilical cord?

The umbilical cord connects your baby to the placenta. The placenta forms in your uterus (womb) during pregnancy to help your baby grow and develop. The umbilical cord carries oxygen and food from the placenta to your baby.



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Why is the umbilical cord clamped and cut after birth?

As soon as your baby is born, your provider places 2 clamps on the umbilical cord to stop the blood flow. Then she or he cuts between the clamps on the cord so your baby is no longer attached to the placenta which is still in your uterus. The placenta will be delivered soon after the baby is born. Some women choose to have their partner or a support person cut the cord if the baby is healthy and the provider feels it is safe.

When should the umbilical cord be clamped?

It is usually safe to wait to clamp the umbilical cord after the baby is born for at least 30 to 60 seconds if your baby is born prematurely and at least 60 seconds and possibly longer if your baby is born near your due date. The cord may need to be cut sooner if the baby needs care right away.

Can I hold my baby while she or he is attached to the umbilical cord?

Yes, the umbilical cord is usually long enough for your baby to be placed on your belly or chest before the cord is cut.

What are the benefits of waiting to clamp the umbilical cord?

If the umbilical cord is not clamped and cut right after the baby is born, more blood flows through the umbilical cord to the baby. This extra blood may lower the chance of your baby having low iron levels at 4 to 6 months of life.

Could waiting to clamp and cut the cord cause any problems for my baby or me?

Your baby gets extra blood when the umbilical cord is not cut right away. This extra blood might increase the chance that your baby develops jaundice a few days after birth, but this is rare. Newborn babies don't have all the steps needed to process red blood cells so they can develop jaundice, and their skin becomes yellow for a few days. Jaundice is treated by placing your baby under a special light for a day or two until the levels of bilirubin that are in the skin go down to normal.

Can umbilical cord clamping be delayed if my baby is born early?

If your baby is born prematurely (more than 3 weeks before the due date), then he or she must be seen by a health care provider soon after birth. The umbilical cord should be clamped sooner than if your baby is born closer to your due date. The umbilical cord may be clamped at about 30 to 60 seconds after the baby is born. The baby should also be placed lower than your belly or chest in order to allow the blood to flow toward her or him more rapidly during this shorter period of time.

Can umbilical cord clamping be delayed if I have a cesarean?

Yes, usually umbilical cord clamping can be postponed or not done for at least 30 to 60 seconds after your baby is born by cesarean section.

Can umbilical cord clamping be delayed if the cord is wrapped around my baby's neck?

It is common that the umbilical cord is loosely wrapped around the baby's neck at the time of birth, and most babies don't have any problems from this. It is usually possible for the cord to be unwrapped by your provider and umbilical cord clamping can still be delayed.

For More Information**Cord Clamping for the Prevention of Infant Anemia**

World Health Organization

http://www.who.int/elena/titles/cord_clamping/en/**Delayed Cord Clamping**<http://cord-clamping.com/>

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