



GIVING BIRTH TO YOUR BABY AT HOME – UNPLANNED.

It is highly unusual to meet someone who has had a baby unexpectedly at home. Most women get ample notice that the baby is about to arrive - the average first labour is 12-15 hours long! It is important however that you have some idea of what to do if things do go unusually quickly and you don't have time to get to hospital.

It is a good idea to program the labour ward telephone numbers into your mobile or home phone and pin it up in several places around the house!

If you are alone, ring a friend who can come round quickly, or the midwife or GP (which ever can get to you first). Ring the community midwife, the local labour ward and an ambulance in case you need to be transferred to hospital. *Ask the midwife at the labour ward to give you instructions over the phone!*

Try to get yourself into a warm and comfortable room. Spread old (but clean) towels or sheets over the floor and furniture. Have a warm towel ready to wrap the baby in!

Try to delay the birth for as long as possible if you can, by getting on your elbows and knees then lowering your head into your forearms and raising your bottom as high as is comfortable. Try to resist pushing for as long as possible and try to pant or breathe slowly and deeply instead.

If despite your best efforts the baby has decided to make an appearance anyway, your companion will need to help you to birth your baby.

The head should be constantly visible when it is about to be born and the mother should get into a comfortable position. Let the baby's head slide out gradually – the mother shouldn't push as this may cause a tear - **remember to pant!**

Once the head is born there may be a moment or two's rest whilst the shoulders turn, check around the baby's neck of the cord. If it is felt around the baby's neck, gently loop it over the head so that it is out of the way.

Wipe away the mucus from the face and gently from the mouth with a finger. Gently support the baby's head so that the shoulders can be born. Do not pull the baby... guide it out!

Place the baby on mum's tummy and wrap him/her in a towel. Leave the cord alone as there is no need to cut or clamp it at this stage!

If the placenta is delivered before medical help arrives wrap it up with the baby and leave it alone. The supporter should make sure that mum is warm and comfortable. She will need a sanitary towel to put between her legs.

Once all of this has happened, ask the friend to make a cup of tea and wait until medical help arrives whilst you admire the new baby!