

PHASES OF LABOUR



MEEGAN
STEPHENS

LABOUR PROGRESSION

DOULA // NATUROPATH //
HERBALIST

YAY MUMMA!

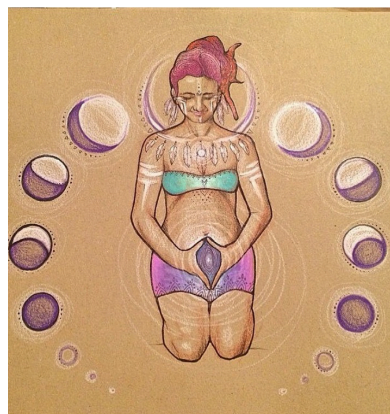
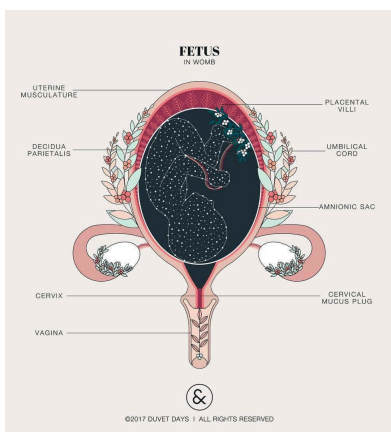
A huge, heartfelt congratulations from me to you!

Giving life is the most special gift a woman can share. I am beyond excited for you and I hope you find these resources helpful and knowledgable and they help to put any stress at ease!

My theory is “don’t question, just ask!” so please feel free to reach out with any specific queries you or your partner have!

Much love,

Meegs x



Birth is a *rite of passage* of women. Their journey should be *honored*, their rights should be fiercely *protected*, and their stories should be *shared*.
– Marcie Macari
author of *She Births*

PREPARATION

Mumma's health and wellbeing

You are about to be a mumma! Whether this be for the very first time or if this is a rainbow or subsequent baby- Congratulations!!!

Your physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing is of the utmost importance.

Please give yourself time and space to regularly check in with each aspect of your health and wellbeing.

Here's some tips for all:

Physical-

- Ensure you are eating nutritious meals with plenty of colourful and vibrant foods; good quality proteins; whole grain carbohydrates; healthy fats and of course mumma cacao!!
- Stay hydrated! Lots of water, hydrolytes, herbal tea and broth!
- Gentle but steady exercise: like walking, yoga, cycling, swimming.
- Vitamin D- enjoy some beautiful sunshine everyday

Mental-

- Notice how you are feeling each day and allow yourself time and space to navigate these feelings
- Share your rollercoaster with your partner/doula/family/support team
- Reach out to support groups if you need external and extra assistance
- Keep a journal of your triggers, fears, jubilation and excitement

Spiritual-

- Note your connection to your self and your baby
- Follow and let yourself be guided by your intuition
- Find support in energy healings or clearings
- Connect with yourself and your baby with specific (and guided) breathwork
- Pregnancy Yoga can assist with spiritual connection

Emotional-

- Journal your feelings, emotions and fears
 - Note down anything to be processed with your doula or health care provider (fear release, questions, unresolved wounds etc)
 - Do an emotional scan of your body each day from head to toe
 - share your thoughts and feelings with your partner, doula, family or support person to share the load.
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Bubba's health and wellbeing

Now - as long as you are ticking the above boxes your baby's health and well-being will be thriving!

- Taking time to slow down
- Listen to your body - do you need sleep? Rest? Movement?
- Connect to your baby through talking, music, breathwork
- Eat well - nutritious and alive foods
- Stay hydrated
- Enjoy time with your partner together!

Birth plan

Birth is beautiful! Birth is raw! birth is powerful! You will remember your birth forever!

Being prepared is key! Knowledge is power and having a clear vision of how you want to birth your baby is vital!

Have your birth plan written early so you can add/adapt it as you and your baby grow.

have this ready and your support people known and prepared to discuss this with your health care providers. Here's some tips to consider/include:

- Support people you would like present
- Birth photography / videography
- Room preferences
- Views on pain relief
- Intervention preferences
- Before due date arrival
- After date arrival
- Upon arrival to birth center/hospital
- Consent around vaginal exams and intervention
- Partner contributions
- Pushing preferences
- After birth process- cord / placenta preference / skin to skin
- Immediate after birth shots - placenta / vit K etc

PHASE ONE

Warm up

This is SOOOO exciting! Surges will start to arise and this indicates your baby has started the process of labour. Your cervix will ripen, soften and begin dilation here up to around 4cm.

For first-time mums this could go on for a good amount of time, while your body is figuring it all out!

Some indications that labour has kicked off are::

- Gradual loss of mucous plug (a show)
- Thick mucous plug
- Membranes releasing - waters breaking
- Wet underpants from fluid · Period pain cramping
- Mild waves of surges
- Very talkative - very excited Discomfort in the lower abdomen
- Diarrhoea or constipated
- Pubic bone discomfort

Once you realise you are in the throws of labour here's some tips of what to do/how to manage the warm-up phase:

- Staying at home for as long as she feels comfortable
- Doing things to keep busy
- Walking around, going up and down stairs and being active
- Use the optimal maternal positioning techniques and stretching · Bouncing and moving around on a fit ball
- Light touch massage and acupressure points
- Shower but avoid the bath until active labour
- Watch funny movies to release oxytocin and endorphins
- Sit on the toilet with legs apart to encourage baby downwards
- Eat plenty of carbs like rice to build up energy stores
- Say affirmations and be positive
- Balance of movement and relaxation
- Get plenty of sleep to conserve energy and prepare for the rest of the marathon

Active Labour

Active labour is generally guided by dilation of the cervix being between 4cm-7cm.

This phase it is hard work!! You probably need to stop and focus on your breathing during each surge; this time is important to focus on your hypnobirthing techniques, your affirmations and your support.

If you are choosing to birth in a hospital a general rule is 3:1:1 with your surges.

3: minutes between each surge

1: lasting for one minute in length

1: if this has been this way for one hour

This is when you can think about travelling to hospital! However, mumma knows best - so listen deeply to your body and you will know when it is time to stay home or time to move to your birthing suite.

Some signs you may experience during the active phase are:

- Surges lasting longer, and getting closer together
- Surges feeling more intense, harder to talk through them
- She may feel like she needs to go to the toilet more
- Increased pressure in the rectum and groin
- Increase in bodily fluids, mucous and blood being released
- Feelings of being stretched, or feeling baby move down
- Less likely to be able to talk during a surge

What to do during the active labour phase:

- Turn off the lights, close the curtains or blinds – make the room dark and comfortable and safe
- Put on music or guided meditation / hypnosis
- Rocking, bouncing and rotating hips on the fit ball
- Counter pressure on lower back during Surges
- Double hip squeeze
- Spinning Babies techniques – rebozo
- Movement, walking around and stairs
- Massage and acupressure points
- Positive affirmations, and encouragement
- Getting into the bath or shower
- Five senses for tools & techniques
- Follow your intuition and flow

Transition

This is the transition from the first stage of labour to the next stage which is birth.

This means that the cervix progresses usually from 7cms until it is fully dilated, and baby is moving down into the birth canal. At this stage you might feel like you have hit a brick wall and it can be the most physically and emotionally challenging period of labour, that can last anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours or longer.

Surges may be coming more often, and some women find them difficult to work through with not much rest in between; this is when it can be helpful to dive

THROUGH the wave.

You are at your most vulnerable here!!

You are being flooded with adrenaline to make you alert and to give you the power and stamina to push your baby out as opposed to the endorphins and loved up feelings of oxytocin. Get ready to meet your precious bundle!

Some signs during the transition phase are:

- Nausea or vomiting
 - Irrational, angry, dismissive, or demanding behaviour
 - Going within and seems like you are not listening, but in fact you will be acutely aware of what is being said around you!
 - Feels hot or cold
 - Starts verbalising or making deep primal noises
 - Starts shaking (this is the adrenalin preparing you to push)
 - Lots of discharge, mucous and perhaps blood
 - Sometimes women get a purple line in the bottom crack
 - Uncontrollable urge to push or bear down
 - More intense pressure and strong sensations in the lower back
 - Feeling like she needs to do a poo due to the pressure in the rectum
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PHASE TWO

Birth

YAY!! Your hard work is paying off and shortly you will be holding your baby!!

This is where the head will appear – perhaps moving forward and we may just see the top of the head and hair, and then it disappears again.

I encourage you to reach down and touch the top of baby’s head. You may get a burning sensation around the perineum as it stretches, however with slow birth breathing and relaxation this will help to reduce the intensity of the burning and help the perineum to stretch gradually and gently, and some women do not even experience that burning sensation.

You will get an overwhelming desire to “bear down” or push; often without any coaching or need for guidance.

Breathing is important to relax muscles and get oxygen to baby. This is where you change from “progress breathing” to “birth breathing.”

Low deep noises, grunts, or groans rather than high-pitched screaming / screeching are all natural and normal signs of birth.

Prompts to visualise your perineum opening wide to allow baby to move out gently with your breath

Be engaged in this process, using your own intuition and hands to assist, guide and feel where your baby is!

Cord

Once your babe is born it is encouraged for immediate skin to skin contact for mumma and bubba.

Again, I could encourage you to allow the cord to be left until completely white and floppy to ensure the baby receives all of its blood from the placenta!

Once the cord has turned white the partner or preferred person can clamp and cut the cord.

PHASE THREE

Placenta Birth

Once your baby is born, the third stage is to birth the placenta.

The placenta really is an amazing organ and has been the lifeline of the baby for the duration of pregnancy. T

he baby uses the placenta as it's lungs, digestive system, and liver. Without the placenta, there can be no new life! how incredible is this organ!!

If you choose to have a physiological birth of the placenta, this means that you will prefer to wait for surges to start again to detach the placenta from the uterine wall and be born.

It is hard to predict how long this process can take, sometimes it is as quick as 15 minutes and then other times it can be over an hour or longer.

If you have skin to skin and also wait for your baby to breast crawl or put your baby straight to your breast to start sucking, nuzzling, or just touching the breast, this will then trigger the release of more oxytocin to increase the effectiveness of contractions to birth the placenta.

You want smell, touch, taste, sound, and breast to trigger the release of oxytocin so your placenta is released efficiently.

Visitation

Be cautious of overdoing it too soon! Taking it slow is VITAL! For your recovery and also for you to bond with your precious new baby!

Put a message out to your friends and family that want to meet your new baby. This message could include your plans for a caesarean birth and what you *need* to support your recovery and *how* the can best show up and help during their visit!

Also include a disclaimer of “no drop in visits!”

Breastfeeding support

Bonding with your baby is a beautiful time! One that you should enjoy! Breastfeeding can be tricky and sometimes difficult.

Be aware of this and plan to have some support to guide you through this journey.

Engage a doula, a lactation specialist, or a midwife to be present and assist with any questions and queries you might have to make this a smoother road for you and your baby!

Fourth Trimester

This I cannot stress enough:

Rest, rest, rest!!! It's the very best thing you can do, for yourself, your new baby and your family unit.

You never get this time back and leaning in to meet and bond with your new baby is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Allow yourself time and space to settle into the fourth trimester. It's a huge adjustment and support is key.

- Hydration is vital!
- Nutritious meals
- Healthy snacks on hand - breastfeeding is hard work! Snack away
- Sleep whenever you get a chance
- Sunshine - enjoy the vitamin D on your face and body (especially with no bra and sore breasts!!)
- Debriefing with a doula, counsellor or good friend
- journaling your process of birth and post partum
- Breathework can help you stay connected, calm and present
- Limit screen time - stay present and in your body, not distracted and overstimulated

BIRTH YOUR WAY

Details:

Holistic Doula // Naturopath // Herbalist // Shamanic Space holder

Please reach out for more details and in depth support and love.

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