



# VAGINAL BIRTH BENEFITS

for BABY AND MOTHER

**A natural birth or vaginal delivery is when a woman gives birth through their vagina. Vaginal deliveries are the most common and most preferred method of delivery, accounting for 80% of births worldwide. This is because they are typically low-risk and carry the most benefits to the birthing mother and baby.**

## Reasons to consider a natural birth

A vaginal delivery offers several benefits to both the birthing person and the fetus. A vaginal delivery involves no surgery, none of the possible complications of surgery, a shorter hospital stay and a quicker return to normal daily activities.

A natural birth might also be appealing if you want to experience vaginal childbirth.

It's important to consider future pregnancies, too. If you're planning for more pregnancies, vaginal birth might help you avoid the risks of multiple cesarean deliveries, such as placental problems.



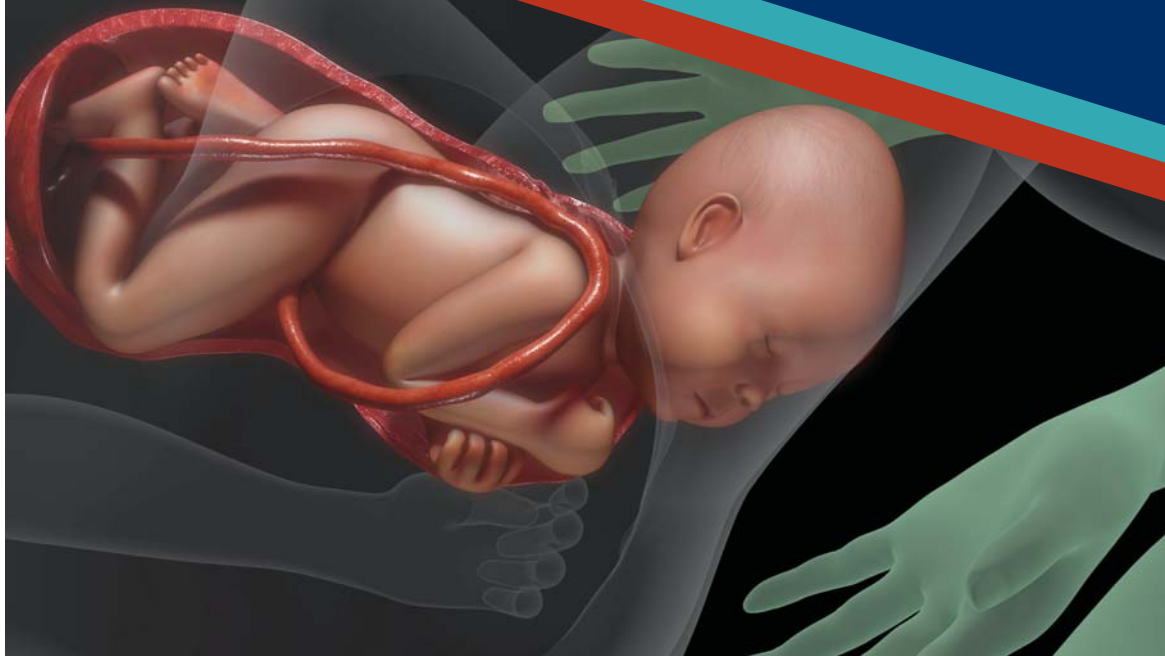
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## Benefits of natural birth

Here are a few reasons why mothers should opt for a natural birthing process, unless there's a very strong reason to choose otherwise:

- **Avoidance of the risk of surgery and anaesthesia.** Vaginal deliveries do not need anaesthesia and this eliminates any side effects the baby may face.
- **Shorter recovery time.** Mothers who choose natural childbirth recover much faster than those from a C-section. They can generally stand up within a few hours of the delivery and walk around without support. During childbirth, hormones called endorphins are released in the body. These prove to be pain-relieving and help the body in dealing with pain. While you should avoid any strenuous activity for six weeks after a vaginal birth to allow your body to heal, you should be able to perform your regular daily tasks within a couple of days.
- **Lower risk of Lactation begins sooner.**
- **Lower chance of future pregnancy complications.**



## The benefits of vaginal delivery for the fetus are:

- **Lower chance of respiratory conditions for a number of reasons.** While your baby is in the womb, its lungs are filled with fluid. Hormonal changes that occur during labour start to clear the fluid, and much of the rest is squeezed out as your baby passes through your birth canal. Any remaining fluid is coughed out after the birth or absorbed by your baby's body.
- **Improved immune system function as your baby passes through your birth canal,** it ingests bacteria that contributes to its stomach health and boosts its immune system. Although a baby's microbiome – or collection of microbes – begins to form in the womb, vaginal delivery is an essential part of the process.
- **More likely to breastfeed (chest feed).** According to the World Health Organisation (WHO's) review of current research, early breastfeeding (within the first hour after birth) increases the likelihood that a baby will be breastfed exclusively from one to four months as well as the overall duration of breastfeeding. Because of the well-documented benefits of colostrum ("first milk") and breastfeeding in general, the WHO recommends that breastfeeding be initiated as soon as possible after birth.

## Reasons why a natural birth would not be recommended

**A vaginal delivery is usually the preferred delivery method. However, certain conditions make a vaginal delivery dangerous. Your healthcare provider may recommend a C-section delivery if:**

- Your baby is in a breech position.
- You have placenta previa or a problem with your placenta.
- You have an untreated infection or open genital lesions from herpes simplex virus.
- You have a chronic health condition.

**It is critical that you discuss your birth options with your doctor.**

## Questions to ask your doctor when you fall pregnant

**It's hard to know what to expect from a vaginal delivery, especially if you've never given birth. Even if you've had previous vaginal deliveries, each delivery is unique and different. Some common questions that people ask their healthcare provider about a vaginal delivery are:**

- What are the risks of a vaginal delivery?
- How will I know when to push?
- How can I reduce my risk of vaginal tearing?
- How will I know labor is starting?
- When should I go to the hospital?
- How long will it take to recover from vaginal delivery?
- Is there anything I can do to improve my chances of a normal delivery?



## Importance of antenatal care

Although you may be feeling well after giving birth, it is important to go for all your antenatal check-ups. Regular check-ups after giving birth is an important part of staying healthy and making sure your baby is healthy.

**Remember** - once your baby is born, please make sure you register your baby as a dependant. This will give you peace of mind that your baby will receive appropriate medical care if needed.