

Birth Terminology

Abruptio Placenta: A condition where the placenta separates from the uterus before childbirth, which can cause heavy bleeding and threaten the baby's and mother's life.

Afterbirth: The delivery of the placenta from the uterus after childbirth. The period from just after the childbirth until just after the placenta is expelled is called the third stage of labor.

Albumin: A protein found in the blood that helps maintain fluid balance. During pregnancy, it's normal to have small amounts of this protein in the urine, but if it happens in the second half of pregnancy, it may be a sign of pre-eclampsia, a potentially serious condition.

Alpha-fetoprotein: (AFP, α -fetoprotein; also sometimes called alpha-1-fetoprotein, alpha-fetoglobulin, or alpha fetal protein) A protein produced by the fetal liver that can be measured in maternal blood or urine to screen for certain birth defects.

Amino acid: The building blocks of proteins that are essential to build muscle and other tissue.

Amniocentesis: (also referred to as amniotic fluid test or AFT) A prenatal test usually done when a woman is between 14 and 16 weeks pregnant where a small amount of amniotic fluid is extracted using a needle to diagnose genetic disorders and other conditions in the fetus.

Amniotic Fluid: Slightly yellowish liquid surrounding the baby within the amniotic sac that provides protection and cushioning.

Amniotic sac: The membrane-filled sac that contains the developing fetus and amniotic fluid during pregnancy.

Anencephaly: A severe birth defect that occurs during embryonic development and where a portion of the baby's brain, skull, and scalp fail to develop properly. With very few exceptions, infants with this disorder do not survive longer than a few hours or possibly days after their birth.

Anesthesia: The use of drugs to block pain or sensation during medical procedures or surgery.

Anomaly: Malformation or abnormality of a body part or deviation from the common rule, type, arrangement, or form.

Anterior Fontanelle: (bregmatic fontanelle, frontal fontanelle) lozenge-shaped fontanelle placed at the junction of the sagittal suture, coronal suture, and frontal suture. It allows the skull to deform during birth to ease its passage through the birth canal and for expansion of the brain after birth.

Antibiotic: A type of antimicrobial drug used to treat or prevent bacterial infections.

Antibody: (also known as an immunoglobulin) A protein produced by the immune system to identify and neutralize pathogens such as bacteria and viruses.

APGAR scoring system: A quick assessment done immediately after birth to evaluate a newborn's overall health and well-being based on five criteria: Appearance, Pulse, Grimace, Activity, and Respiration.

Apnea: A temporary cessation of breathing, particularly in newborns.

Areola: The pigmented circular area surrounding the nipple on the breast.

Aspiration: the inhalation or ingestion of meconium (the baby's first stool) or amniotic fluid into the baby's airways. This can occur when a baby is distressed during labor or delivery and takes a breath before being fully born.

Bilirubin: A yellow pigment produced by the breakdown of red blood cells that can accumulate in the body. It is responsible for the yellow color of bruises and the yellow discoloration in jaundice.

Bloody Show: The discharge of mucus and blood from the cervix near the end of pregnancy.

Breech Presentation: When the baby is positioned with their bottom first instead of the head first for birth.

Caput Sucedaneum: A swelling or edema that can occur on the baby's scalp during pregnancy or labor and delivery. Very often, this is due to an early rupture of the membranes or too little amniotic fluid. Vacuum extraction done during a difficult birth can also increase the chances of a caput succedaneum.

Cephalohematoma: A hemorrhage of blood between the skull and the periosteum. The usual causes of a cephalohematoma are a prolonged second stage of labor or instrumental delivery, particularly forceps delivery.

Cephalopelvic Disproportion: When the baby's head or body size is too large to fit through the mother's pelvis, making vaginal delivery difficult or impossible.

Cervidil: A medication used to ripen or soften the cervix in preparation for inducing labor.

Cervix: The lower part of the uterus that opens into the vagina and dilates during labor. In becoming wider, the cervix also becomes shorter, a phenomenon known as effacement. Generally, the second phase of labor begins when the cervix has dilated to 10 cm (4 in), which is regarded as its fullest dilation

Cesarean: A surgical procedure where the baby is delivered, often called a C-section. An incision of about 15 cm (6 inches) is made through the mother's lower abdomen. The uterus is then opened with a second incision and the baby delivered.

Chloasma: (also known as Melasma) A common skin condition during pregnancy characterized by darkening of certain areas, usually the face. It is sometimes called "the mask of pregnancy".

Chorionic villi sampling: A prenatal test where a small sample of placental tissue is collected for genetic testing.

Chromosomes: Structures within cells that carry genetic information or DNA. Human cells have 23 pairs of chromosomes (22 pairs of autosomes and one pair of sex chromosomes).

Circumcision: Surgical removal of the foreskin from the penis, often done for cultural, religious, or medical reasons.

Colostrum: The first milk produced by the breast during pregnancy and early postpartum period, rich in antibodies and nutrients. It has a mild laxative effect, encouraging the passing of the baby's first stool, which is called meconium.

Complete Breech: A type of breech presentation where baby's knees are bent and his feet and bottom are closest to the birth canal. Incomplete

breech is when one of the baby's knees is bent and his foot and bottom are closest to the birth canal.

Congenital: Refers to a condition present at birth, either inherited or acquired during fetal development. Those characterized by structural deformities are termed “congenital anomalies” and involve defects in a developing fetus.

Contraction: The tightening and relaxing of the uterus during labor to help move the baby down the birth canal. Prior to actual labor, women may experience Braxton Hicks contractions, sometimes known as “false labor.”

Crowned/Crowning: When the baby's head becomes visible at the opening of the vagina during childbirth.

Dilatation: The widening or opening of the cervix during labor. Cervical dilatation is described in centimeters from 0 to 10. At 0, the cervix is closed. At 10, it's completely dilated.

Doppler: A handheld device that uses ultrasound to detect and monitor the baby's heartbeat.

Dystocia: Difficult or prolonged labor due to various factors such as inadequate contractions or fetal positioning. A partograph is often used to track labor progression and diagnose problems.

Eclampsia: A serious condition during pregnancy characterized by high blood pressure and seizures.

Ectopic pregnancy: (Also known as eccyesis or tubal pregnancy) When a fertilized egg implants itself outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tubes.

Edema: Swelling caused by excess fluid buildup in the body, often seen in legs, ankles, and feet during pregnancy.

Effacement: The thinning or shortening of the cervix that occurs as a woman prepares for childbirth. Effacement may be measured in percentages, from zero percent (not effaced at all) to 100 percent, which indicates a paper-thin cervix.

Embryo: The stage of development from fertilization until about 8 weeks after conception.

Endometriosis: A condition in which the tissue lining the uterus grows outside of it, causing pain and fertility issues.

Engaged: When the baby's head descends into the pelvis in preparation for birth, which usually happens during the last month of pregnancy.

Epidural: A type of anesthesia given through a catheter placed near the spinal cord to relieve pain during labor.

Episiotomy: A surgical incision made between the vagina and anus (perineum) to widen it during childbirth to prevent tearing that can be difficult to repair. The cut is repaired with stitches (sutures).

Erythroblastosis fetalis: (Rh incompatibility disease and ABO incompatibility disease) A condition in which the mother's antibodies attack and destroy the red blood cells of the fetus caused by incompatibility between a mother's blood and her unborn baby's blood.

Fallopian tubes: Tubes that connect the ovaries to the uterus, where fertilization of an egg usually occurs.

Family Physician: A doctor who provides primary healthcare services to individuals and families, including prenatal and postnatal care.

Fetal Distress: A condition where the fetus is not receiving enough oxygen or nutrients, usually monitored during labor. Due to its imprecision, the term “non-reassuring fetal status” has largely replaced it. It is characterized by changes in fetal movement, growth, heart rate, and the presence of meconium-stained fluid.

Fetoscopy: A procedure in which a thin, lighted tube with a camera or scope is inserted into the uterus to examine the fetus.

Fetus: The developing baby from about 9 weeks after conception until birth.

Fontanelle: The soft spots on a baby's skull where the bones have not yet fused together.

Forceps: Tong shaped instruments used to assist in the delivery of the baby by gently gripping the baby's head.

Frank Breech: A position where the baby's buttocks are positioned to be delivered first during birth.

Fundus: The top portion of the uterus, which can be felt through the abdomen during pregnancy.

Gestational age: The age of the pregnancy measured from the first day of the woman's last menstrual period (LMP), or the corresponding age as estimated by other methods (e.g. adding 14 days to a known duration since fertilization (as is possible in vitro fertilization), or by obstetric ultrasonography).

Gynecologist: A doctor who specializes in women's reproductive health, including the female reproductive system and fertility.

Hemorrhage: Excessive bleeding, usually associated with complications during childbirth or postpartum.

Hormone: Chemical messengers produced by glands in the body that regulate various bodily functions, including pregnancy and childbirth.

Hydrocephalus: A condition where there is an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in the brain, causing swelling and potentially affecting brain development.

Incontinence: The inability to control bladder or bowel movements. Urinary incontinence can occur as the baby places heavy pressure on the bladder.

Induced Labor: When labor is started artificially using medication or other medical interventions.

Induction: The process of initiating labor artificially.

Jaundice: A yellowing of the skin and eyes due to high levels of bilirubin in the blood, often seen in newborns.

Labia: The outer folds of skin surrounding the opening of the vagina.

Labor: The process by which the uterus contracts to expel the baby and placenta from the mother's body. Labor usually starts two weeks before or after the estimated date of delivery.

Lactation: The production of breast milk for feeding the baby.

Lanugo: Fine hair that covers the body of a fetus, usually shed before birth, but is sometimes present at birth. It disappears on its own within a few weeks.

Lightening: When the baby's head drops lower into the pelvis, relieving pressure on the diaphragm and making breathing easier for the mother. In clinical terms this is referred to as engagement.

Linea nigra: A dark line that may appear vertically on the abdomen during pregnancy.

Lochia: The vaginal discharge after childbirth, consisting of blood, mucus, and tissue. Lochia discharge typically continues for 4 to 6 weeks after childbirth, which is known as the postpartum period.

Meconium: The first stool passed by a newborn, which is thick, greenish-black, and sticky.

Misoprostol: A medication used to induce labor or help with cervical ripening, cause an abortion, prevent and treat stomach ulcers, and treat postpartum bleeding due to poor contraction of the uterus.

Mucus: A slimy substance produced in various parts of the body, including the cervix, to protect and lubricate.

Neonatal: Relating to the period immediately after birth until 28 days of age. Before birth, the term fetus is used.

Neonate: A newborn infant, usually referring to the first four weeks of life.

Neonatologist: A doctor who specializes in the care of newborns, especially those who are sick or premature.

Neural tube defects: Birth defects that occur due to the incomplete development of the neural tube, which is a structure that forms early on in fetal development and eventually becomes the brain and spinal cord.

NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit): A specialized hospital unit that provides medical care to premature or critically ill newborns.

Nubain: A medication used for pain relief during labor and delivery.

OB/GYN (Obstetrician/Gynecologist): A medical professional who specializes in women's reproductive health and childbirth.

Obstetrician: A medical professional who specializes in managing pregnancy, labor, and delivery.

Ovulation: The release of an egg from the ovaries during a woman's menstrual cycle, which typically occurs monthly.

Oxytocin: A hormone that is important in childbirth, as it is responsible for stimulating uterine contractions and milk production.

Pediatrician: A medical professional who specializes in the care of infants, children, and adolescents, and the age limit usually ranges from birth up to 18 years of age.

Pelvic floor: A group of muscles that span the area below the pelvis and support the pelvic organs, such as the bladder and uterus.

Perinatologist: A medical professional who specializes in the management of high-risk pregnancies and complications during childbirth.

Perineum: The area between the vagina and anus that stretches during childbirth.

Phenergan: A medication used for nausea, vomiting during pregnancy, pre- and post-operative sedation as well as obstetric sedation

Phenylketonuria (PKU): A genetic disorder that affects the body's ability to metabolize the amino acid phenylalanine.

Pitocin: A synthetic form of oxytocin that is used to induce or augment labor.

Placenta: An organ that forms during pregnancy and provides nutrients and oxygen to the developing fetus.

Placenta Previa: A condition where the placenta partially or completely covers the cervix, which can lead to complications during childbirth.

Placental Abruption: A complication where the placenta separates from the uterine wall before childbirth, which can be dangerous for both the mother and baby.

Polyhydramnios: A condition where there is an excessive amount of amniotic fluid surrounding the baby during pregnancy.

Post-Term: A pregnancy that has gone beyond 42 weeks (294 days since the first day of the last menstrual period), which increases the risk of complications for both the mother and baby. Other terms often used for this include prolonged pregnancy, post-dates pregnancy, and postmaturity.

Posterior: The position of the baby during childbirth where the baby's head is facing up instead of down (normal presentation) towards the mother's pelvis.

Postpartum: The period of time immediately following childbirth and extending for about six weeks.

Pre-eclampsia: A serious complication of pregnancy characterized by high blood pressure and a large amount of protein in the urine.

Presentation: the position of the baby in the mother's uterus during childbirth, such as head-first or breech or shoulder.

Preterm: A baby born before 37 weeks of pregnancy.

Prolapse of the cord: A complication during childbirth where the umbilical cord drops into the birth canal before the baby, potentially cutting off the baby's oxygen supply.

Prostaglandin Cream: A medication used to soften and ripen the cervix in preparation for induction or augmentation of labor.

Pyelonephritis: A type of urinary tract infection that can occur during pregnancy and can potentially lead to preterm labor.

Quickening: The first movements a pregnant woman feels from her baby, typically occurring around 15-20 weeks of pregnancy.

Rh Factor: A protein found on red blood cells that can cause complications during pregnancy if the mother is Rh-negative and the baby is Rh-positive.

Rubella: (also known as German measles or three-day measles) A viral infection that can cause birth defects if contracted during pregnancy.

Ruptured Membrane: Refers to when the amniotic sac surrounding the baby breaks, causing the release of amniotic fluid.

Shoulder Dystocia: A complication during childbirth where the baby's shoulders become stuck behind the mother's pubic bone.

Sonography refers to the use of ultrasound technology to visualize the baby and the mother's uterus during pregnancy.

Speculum: A duck-bill-shaped medical tool used to examine the cervix during a gynecological exam or childbirth.

Stillbirth: The birth of a baby who has died in the womb after 20 or more weeks of pregnancy.

Striae: Also known as stretch marks, these are streaks or bands of discolored skin that may appear on the abdomen, thighs, breasts, or other areas during pregnancy due to the stretching of the skin.

Subchorionic Hemorrhage: A condition where blood accumulates between the placenta and the uterine wall during pregnancy.

Syntocin: A synthetic form of the hormone oxytocin, used to induce or augment labor contractions during childbirth.

Timing Contractions: The process of measuring the duration and frequency of contractions during labor to determine the progress of labor and when to go to the hospital or birthing center. Contractions are measured from the beginning of one contraction until the beginning of the next contraction.

Toxoplasmosis: A parasitic infection that can be transmitted through contaminated food, causing flu-like symptoms in pregnant women and potentially harming the developing baby.

Transverse presentation: A position in which the baby is positioned horizontally in the uterus, with their head on one side and their feet on the other. This is not the ideal position for vaginal delivery.

Trimester: One of the three equal periods into which pregnancy is divided, each lasting approximately three months.

Umbilical Cord: The flexible cord-like structure that connects the fetus to the placenta, providing nutrients and oxygen and removing waste products.

Vacuum Extractor: A medical device used during vaginal delivery to assist in the extraction of the baby's head by creating suction on the scalp.

Vernix: A white, cheese-like substance that covers the skin of a newborn baby, which helps protect the skin from the amniotic fluid during pregnancy.

ACRONYMS

AB – Abortion

AF- Anteflexed

AFI– Amniotic Fluid Index

AFP – Alpha Fetoprotein

AMA – Advanced Maternal Age

AROM – Artificial Rupture of Membranes

ASCUS – Atypical Cells of Undetermined

AUB – Abnormal Uterine Bleeding

AV – Anteverted

BBOW – Bulging Bag of Water

BCP – Birth Control Pills

BID – Twice a Day

BM – Bowel Movement

BOW – Bag of Waters

BP – Blood Pressure

BPD – Biparietal Diameter

BPP – Biophysical Profile

BRF – Breast Feeding

BRP – Bathroom Privileges

BSO – Bilateral Salpingo-oophorectomy

BTBV – Beat to Beat Variability

BTL – Bilateral Tubal Ligation

BUFA – Baby Up for Adoption

BUS – Bartholins/urethra/skene's

C/S – Cesarean Section

CBC– Complete Blood Count

CC – Cubic Centimeters

CE – Cervical Exam

CIN – Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia

CIRC- Circumcision

CM – Cervical Motion

CMT– Cervical Motion Tenderness

CNM – Certified Nurse Midwife

CTX – Contractions

CPD – Cephalopelvic Disproportion

CPM – Contractions Per Minute/Certified Professional Midwife

CST – Contraction Stress Test

CVS – Chorionic Villus Sampling

D&C – Dilation and Curettage

D&E -dilation and Evacuation

DIC – Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation

DEM – Direct Entry Midwife

DMPA – Depo-provera

DUB – Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding

EAB – Elective Abortion

EDC – Estimated Date of Confinement (Due Date)

EDD – Estimated Due Date

EFM – External Fetal Monitoring

EGA – Estimated Gestational Age

ERT – Estrogen Replacement Therapy

FF – Fundus Firm

FH – Fundal Height

FHR – Fetal Heart Rate

FHT – Fetal Heart Tones

FL– Femur Length

FLM – Fetal Lung Maturity

FM– Fetal Movements

FTP – Failure to Progress

FWB – Fetal Well Being

GAB– Genetic Abortion

GBS – Group B Strep

GDM– Gestational Diabetes Mellitus

GFM– Good Fetal Movement

GTPAL – Gravida, Term, Preterm, Abortions, Living

GTT – Glucose Tolerance Test

HCG– Human Chorionic Gonadotropin

HELLP – Hemolysis, Elevated Liver Enzymes, Low Platelet Count

HGSIL– High Grade Squamous Intraepithelial Lesion

HRT – Hormone Replacement Therapy

ILF – Indicated Low Forceps

IUFD– Intrauterine Fetal Demise

IUG – Intrauterine Gestation

IUGR – Intrauterine Growth Restriction

IUP – Intrauterine Pregnancy

L&D – Labor and Delivery

LAVH– Laparoscopic Assisted Vaginal Hysterectomy

LBW– Low Birth Weight

LEEP– Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure

LEP – Lumbar Epidural

LGA – Large for Gestational Age

LGSIL – Low Grade Squamous Intraepithelial Lesion

LMP – Last Menstrual Period

LOA – Left Occiput Anterior

LOA – Lysis of Adhesion

LOF – Leakage of Fluid

LOP – Left Occiput Posterior

LOT – Left Occiput Transverse

LTCS – Low Transverse Cesarean Section

LTV – Long Term Viability

MBPP – Modified Biophysical Profile

NPO – Nothing by Mouth

NST – Non Stress Test

NSVD – Normal Spontaneous Vaginal Delivery

OA– Occiput Anterior

OCP – Oral Contraceptive Pill

OCT– Oxytocin Challenge Test

OP – Occiput Posterior

PAPPA-A – Pregnancy Associated Plasma Protein a

PEDC – Post Estimated Date of Confinement

PG – Phosphatidyl Glycerol

PIH – Pregnancy Induced Hypertension

PNV – Prenatal Vitamins

PPD – Post Partum Day

PPROM – Preterm Premature Rupture of Membranes

PTL – Preterm Labor

RF- Retroflexed

ROA– Right Occiput Anterior

ROL – Rule Out Labor

ROM– Rupture of Membranes

ROP– Right Occiput Posterior

ROT – Right Occiput Transverse

RV – Retroverted

SAB – Spontaneous Abortion

SB – Stillborn

SDE – Suction, Dilation, and Evacuation

SGA– Small for Gestational Age

SOL– Spontaneous Onset of Labor

SROM – Spontaneous Rupture of Membranes

SUI– Stress Urinary Incontinence

SVE – Sterile Vaginal Exam

TAB– Therapeutic Abortion

TAH – Total Abdominal Hysterectomy

TAH/BSO– Total Abdominal Hysterectomy/bilateral Salpingo
Oophorectomy

TKFF– Titrate to Keep Fundus Firm

TOA – Tubo-ovarian Abscess

TOLAC – Trial of Labor After Cesarean Section

TOP -termination of Pregnancy

TVH– Total Vaginal Hysterectomy

VBAC– Vaginal Birth After Cesarean Section

VFI – Viable Female Infant

VMI -viable Male Infant

VTX – Vertex