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LOTUS BIRTH

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ABSTRACT

The term “Lotus birth” recognises the practice of leaving the umbilical cord without cutting till natural separation occurs. There is no clear existing guideline, policy or procedures for this practice. Safety in delivery as well as caring for newborn and her mother is prime importance. Hence, clarity for Lotus delivery in any set up is highly recommended. The positive effects of delayed cord clamping have been extensively researched. A woman called Clair Lotus Day imitated the holistic approach of physiological clamping and cutting from an anthropoid ape in 1974. The chimpanzee did not separate the placenta from the newborn. After birth commonly the placenta is considered as disposable waste but the community should be made aware about its significance of being rich in high collagen and rejuvenating cells that the baby needs for its well-being.

Keywords: Lotus Birth, Placenta, Umbilical cord, WHO

INTRODUCTION

Lotus birth has become the new trend or better choice in birthing process. Delayed cord clamping was a norm back in the 1950s in midwifery. Third stage of labour is passively managed without use of either oxytocic drugs or cord traction during this lotus birth. After delivery, the placenta is washed thoroughly, salted, and encased in good absorbent material. Sometimes, wrapping in herbs such as lavender is done as this may aid with keeping bad odour away. Lotus birth is one of an effective remedy to improve immune and circulatory system of babies.

LOTUS BIRTH

Lotus birth is also called as “Umbilical Cord Non-Severance”

A lotus birth is one in which the umbilical cord stays attached to a baby after delivery so that it can remain connected to the placenta. Rather than being cut off soon after birth, the cord is left to dry and come off on its own, which can take five to 15 days. The placenta (afterbirth) can be wrapped in fabric or kept in a bag or bowl. Usually, parents treat the placenta with herbs such as lavender, rosemary, and salts to dry out the organ and decrease bad odour.



PURPOSE OF LOTUS BIRTH

Lotus birth is the practice of not cutting the umbilical cord after birth of the baby and instead, letting the placenta stay attached until it detaches spontaneously. It's believed to be a gentle ritual that comforts the baby.

BENEFITS OF LOTUS BIRTH

Benefits of Lotus birth are as follows:

Healthier and more natural option for the newborn

Gentle, less-invasive transition for the baby from womb to the world

Calm, peaceful and untroubled babies

Increases blood and nourishes baby from the placenta

Decreases injury to the belly button

Allows for a complete transfer of blood from the umbilical cord and placenta back to the baby.

Acts as a spiritual ritual to honour the shared life between baby and placenta

Helps for increasing the infants' iron storage in the blood, and iron is essential for healthy brain development.

Improve infant's immune function

Prevent anaemia and jaundice in the newborn

PROCESS OF LOTUS BIRTH

Lotus birth involves simply leaving the placenta and umbilical cord along with baby after birth. It's typically performed in conjunction with home births, since hospitals may refuse to leave a placenta and umbilical cord intact due to the potential risk for infection.

Some people chose to wash the placenta and treat it with some salt, herbs or essential oils to help it dry out faster and mask the smell. They may also put the placenta in a bag or wrap it in a blanket or towel to absorb moisture and carry it along with the baby. These practices haven't been proven to protect the placenta or reduce the risk of infection.

Just like a traditional cut umbilical cord stump, eventually the cord and placenta will dry out and fall off, usually within a few days to a week or longer after birth of baby.

CARE OF PLACENTA AFTER BIRTH

Lotus births come with some health risks. The following steps are suggested to protect the area around baby's belly button and umbilical cord.

Placenta should be kept near baby and lift or hold baby carefully with clean, thoroughly washed hands to reduce the chances of the cord being tugged, which could potentially cause the cord to be pulled out before it's ready to fall off. Dress the baby in loose, comfortable clothing that opens in the front too.

One must never attempt to remove the umbilical cord by self. It should fall off naturally within three to 10 days after birth, but in some cases, it could take up to 15 days.

It is also important to give attention for signs of any possible infection. Seek immediate medical care for:

A pus or fluid-filled lump near the umbilical cord area.

Red, warm or swollen skin near the umbilical cord area.

Cloudy, foul-smelling discharge or blood coming from the umbilical cord or navel area.

A fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Irritability, lethargy, trouble feeding or decreased activity of the child.

DURATION OF DETACHMENT OF UMBILICAL CORD

Umbilical cord usually detaches after 5-15 days of the birth of the baby.

LOTUS BIRTH VS. DELAYED CORD CLAMPING

Lotus birth should not be confused with delayed cord clamping. Lotus birth leaves the placenta and baby fully attached for days following the baby birth. Delayed cord clamping, on the other hand, is when, instead of clamping and cutting the cord immediately after birth, the healthcare provider or midwife waits for 30 seconds to a few minutes to do so.

The American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) and the American Heart Association (AHA) support delayed cord clamping until the newborn is placed on the parent and assessed. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (ACOG) recommends waiting at least 30-60 seconds after birth to clamp and cut the cord.

The benefits of delayed cord clamping include:

Increased haematocrit values (the ratio of red blood cells to total volume of blood)

Higher levels of iron in baby

Improved transitional blood circulation in the infant after birth

Better formation of red blood cells in the newborn

Need for blood transfusion will be decreased

Decreased rates of intestinal infection (an extremely serious disease of the intestines)

Lower rates of intra ventricular haemorrhage (bleeding in and around the ventricles of the brain)

When we delay the cord clamping, there is a slight increase in the incidence of neonatal jaundice (yellowing of the skin and whites of eyes caused by high levels of a pigment in the blood called bilirubin). However, since the numerous benefits outweigh the risks, major medical organizations recommend delaying cord clamping except in cases of any medical emergencies.

While the touted benefits of lotus birth are primarily based on personal accounts, delayed cord clamping is an evidence-based practice, relying on the most recent research. There is insufficient scientific evidence to support lotus birth.

CONCLUSION

Lotus birth is a holistic approach and spiritual practice of keeping the baby and placenta connected following birth allowing for a natural process of separation of placenta. It is noted that some people choose a lotus birth because they view the placenta as belonging to the baby. Some even feel that prematurely separating the cord can cause the trauma to baby. Un medicated childbirth and home birth are popular among parents who choose lotus birth. Proper counselling should be done before allowing mother and their family choose this mode of delivery.

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