

# Essential Supplies for Birth – Dianne Bjarnson, M.S.M.

## 1. Something to dry the baby off with – 2 to 3 towels.

When the baby is born it should be placed skin to skin on the mother's abdomen for at least the first hour for the seeding of the microbiome. Dry the baby off with a towel to reduce heat loss that can lead to breathing problems. Remove the damp towel and cover the baby again with a clean dry towel.

## 2. Something sterile to clamp the cord with – 3 umbilical cord clamps, and

## 3. Something sterile to cut the cord with -- scissors or a scalpel.

At birth the umbilical cord is wrapped around the neck of about ¼ of all babies. As soon as the head comes out, have the mother pant for a bit while you check for a cord around the neck by reaching up over the back of the head. If you find a cord, continue to have the mother pant while you try to stretch the cord over the baby's head. You can put a little force into the pull. If you cannot get the cord over the baby's head, try flipping the baby's body out like a fish, while keeping the baby's head next to the side of the mother's leg. This prevents the baby from getting choked.

In about 1 in every 50 to 60 births, the cord is too tight and will not allow the baby to be born. In those cases, take two umbilical cord clamps and clamp the cord about an inch apart. Cut between the clamps, unwind the cord, and have the mother push the baby out. As soon as the first clamp is put on the cord, the oxygen is cut off from the baby, so the procedure needs to be fast, and you need to get the baby born.

An alternative for clamps is cotton string to tie the cord (shoelaces are usually too thick, nylon string will slip, and dental floss will cut through the cord). However, when the baby has to be born quickly, tying a double or triple square knot takes more time than simply putting a clamp on the cord. NOTE: Whatever you clamp or tie the cord with and whatever you cut the cord with **has to be sterile**. You can store ready-to-use sterile items, or you can boil the items for 10 to 15 minutes or soak them in alcohol or another disinfectant. The umbilical cord is the main pathway for infection to enter the baby's body, so keep that area very clean.

It is best that the umbilical cord stay attached to the baby for about ten minutes after birth. This allows the baby to receive added blood volume. You can wait a lot longer to clamp or tie the cord. So if you do not have any sterile string, you have plenty of time to sterilize it before tying the cord off. Just keep the placenta in a plastic sack or a bowl next to the baby until the cord is cut.

## 4. Something to suction the baby with – 3 oz. bulb syringe.

Most babies do not need to be suctioned during the birthing process. Occasionally, a baby will need a little respiratory help due to excess fluids or meconium staining (bowel movement in utero). A bulb syringe can then be used to help clear the airway. A 3 oz. bulb syringe has more power than the common 2 oz. bulb syringe. If you have a syringe, boil it in water for 15 minutes to sterilize it.

NOTE: Essential birthing supplies can be purchased from [www.SunstoneFormulas.com](http://www.SunstoneFormulas.com) in Pleasant Grove, UT.



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