

Assisted vaginal birth (ventouse or forceps)



This section is for the patient to make notes if they so wish:

Name:

Who to contact and how:

Notes:

**Diana, Princess of
Wales Hospital**
Scartho Road
Grimsby
DN33 2BA
03033 306999
www.nlg.nhs.uk

**Scunthorpe General
Hospital**
Cliff Gardens
Scunthorpe
DN15 7BH
03033 306999
www.nlg.nhs.uk

**Goole & District
Hospital**
Woodland Avenue
Goole
DN14 6RX
03033 306999
www.nlg.nhs.uk



Kindness · Courage · Respect

Information for patients

An assisted birth means using an instrument to help deliver your baby. There can be many reasons for needing help with the birth of your baby. The main ones are:

- There are concerns about your baby's wellbeing during labour
- Your labour is not progressing as would usually be expected
- You are unable to, or have been advised not to push during delivery

Your obstetrician or the midwife will use a ventouse or forceps to guide your baby during your contractions. The ventouse extractor is a suction device that attaches to your baby's head and connects to a small machine that generates suction or to a palm pump which allows the obstetrician or the advanced midwifery practitioner to guide your baby's head out. Forceps are smooth metal instruments that look like large spoons or tongs. Your obstetrician will place the forceps on either side of your baby's head and will pull gently as you push hard with your contractions.

Ventouse and forceps are both usually safe and effective. Choice of instrument depends on many factors including how well your epidural is working (if you have had one), the wellbeing of your baby, the gestational age and the position of your baby's head.

Your obstetrician or advanced midwifery practitioner will recommend the method most suitable for your individual situation. If one instrument has been chosen and is not effective, they may then either recommend using the other instrument to help you have a vaginal birth or offer a caesarean, depending on your individual circumstances.

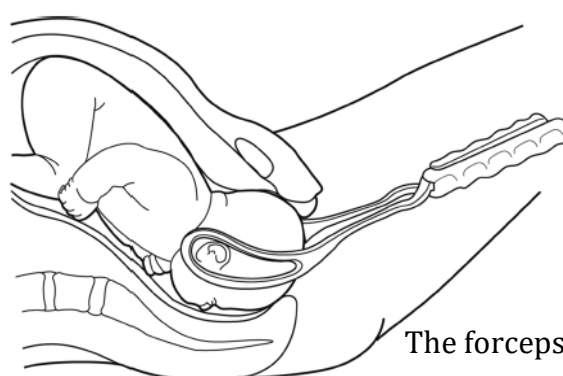
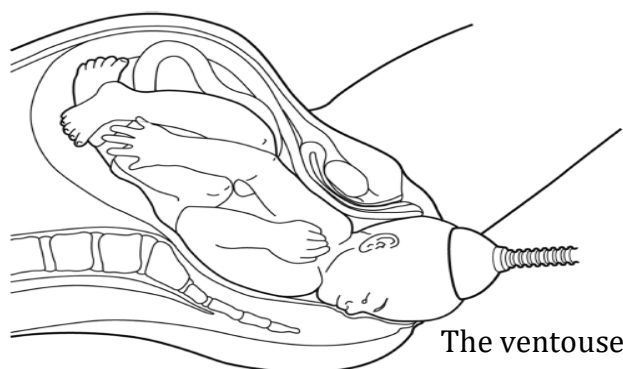
If you are in labour and choose not to have an assisted vaginal birth, the alternatives are to wait for your baby to be born without assistance or to have an emergency caesarean section. Your obstetrician or advanced midwifery practitioner will discuss your options depending on your individual circumstances.

An assisted vaginal delivery is usually safe for you and your baby. However, complications can happen such as:

- Pain around the stitches: it usually settles quickly
- Bleeding: if the bleeding is heavy, you may need a blood transfusion
- Tears: minor tears are common and are easily closed with stitches. Major tears are less common and can also be repaired without causing any problems. Your obstetrician might perform an episiotomy (a cut on the perineal skin and vagina) to help reduce the risk of your uncontrolled tearing

Information for patients

- Damage to your back passage: caused when a major tear or episiotomy extends to your anal muscle itself. Your obstetrician will suture it in the theatre to correct the damage
- Healing problems: sometimes an episiotomy or tear will open slightly but this usually does not need any treatment and still heals well. Your community midwife will provide support and advice on taking care of the wound while you are healing
- Difficulty passing urine: you may need a catheter for few days
- Infection: usually one dose of antibiotics is given to prevent the infection
- Increase risk of venous thromboembolisms: According to your risk score, injections may be given to prevent developing blood clots
- The experience of birth can sometimes be distressing and for some women there is a risk of post-traumatic stress disorder. If this occurs, your midwife will direct you to places where you can receive help
- The ventouse suction cup can leave a temporary swelling on your baby's head that will disappear over the next few days but it may also leave a bruise on your baby's head, called a cephalohaematoma, which will disappear with time (up to 6 to 8 weeks)
- The forceps may leave small marks, bruising or scratching, which is quite common. These usually heal or disappear within a day or two. Rarely, forceps may compress your baby's facial nerve, causing one side of their mouth to droop (palsy). This is usually only temporary
- Babies are usually quite comfortable and continue as normal



Information for patients

Most women recover well after their assisted vaginal birth. You can begin to have sex again when you feel that it's the right time for you.

Having an assisted vaginal birth does not mean you will necessarily have one in your next pregnancy. Most women who have an assisted vaginal birth deliver spontaneously next time.

Any Comments, Compliments, Concerns or Complaints

If you have any other concerns please talk to your nurse, therapist or doctor. Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is available on 03033 306518 (Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Goole). You can also contact nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net

As a Trust we value equality of access to our information and services, therefore alternative formats are available on request at nlg-tr.interpreters@nhs.net

Alternative Languages

All of our leaflets are available to view in different languages via Browsealoud on our website at www.nlg.nhs.uk/patients/patient-leaflets/

Toate pliantele noastre sunt disponibile pentru a fi vizualizate în diferite limbi prin intermediul Browaloud pe site-ul nostru, la www.nlg.nhs.uk/patients/patient-leaflets/

Wszystkie nasze ulotki są dostępne do przeglądania w różnych językach za pośrednictwem Browsealoud na naszej stronie internetowej www.nlg.nhs.uk/patients/patient-leaflets/

Visus mūsu lankstinukus galite peržiūrēti jvairiomis kalbomis, naudodamiesi „Browsealoud“ mūsu svetainėje, adresu www.nlg.nhs.uk/patients/patient-leaflets/

Vse naše zloženke so na voljo za ogled v različnih jezikih prek Browaloud na našem spletnem mestu www.nlg.nhs.uk/patients/patient-leaflets/

Date of Issue: April, 2021

Review Period: April, 2024

Author: Specialty Registrar, Gynaecology

IFP-1275 v1.0



Kindness • Courage • Respect