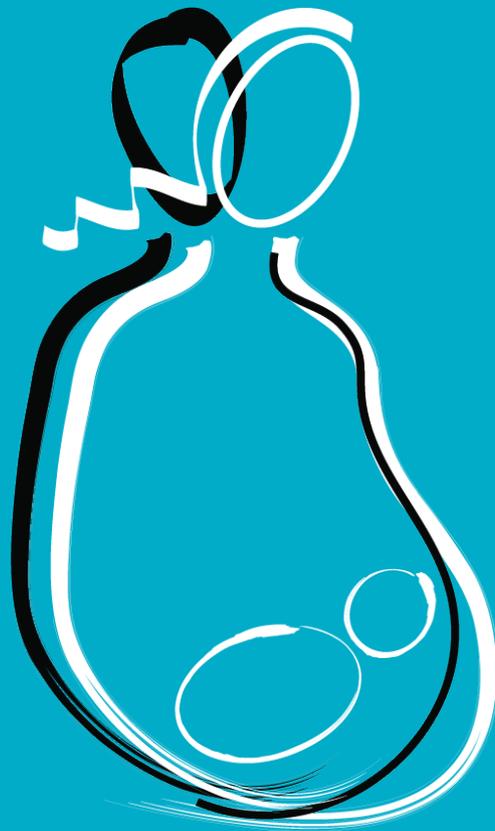


WHO recommendations
**Intrapartum care for
a positive childbirth experience**



**World Health
Organization**

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Intrapartum care for a
positive childbirth experience



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Organization

WHO recommendations: intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience

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Foreword

It has been more than two decades since the World Health Organization (WHO) issued technical guidance dedicated to the care of healthy pregnant women and their babies – *Care in normal birth: a practical guide*. The global landscape for maternity services has changed considerably since that guidance was issued. More women are now giving birth in health care facilities in many parts of the world, and yet suboptimal quality of care continues to impede attainment of the desired health outcomes. While in some settings too few interventions are being provided too late to women, in other settings women are receiving too many interventions that they do not need too soon.

WHO has released several recommendations to address specific aspects of labour management and the leading causes of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in response to the needs of countries. The focus of the global agenda has also gradually expanded beyond the survival of women and their babies, to also ensuring that they thrive and achieve their full potential for health and well-being. These efforts have been catalysed by the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030), and the Every Woman Every Child movement. In addition, the third goal of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development affirms global commitment to ensuring healthy lives and the promotion of well-being for all at all ages.

One of the WHO strategic priorities over the next five years for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets is to support countries to strengthen their health systems to fast-track progress towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC). WHO is supporting countries to ensure that all people and communities have access to and can use the promotive, preventive and curative health services that are appropriate to their needs, and that are effective and of sufficient quality, while not exposing them to financial hardship. An integral part of these efforts is the design of the package of essential services across the spectrum of health disciplines, including reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, from which a set of basic service-delivery indicators can be identified for use in monitoring countries' progress towards UHC.

This guideline is a consolidated set of new and existing recommendations on essential labour and childbirth practices that should be provided to all pregnant women and their babies during labour and childbirth irrespective of socioeconomic setting. It promotes the delivery of a package of labour and childbirth interventions that is critical to ensuring that giving birth is not only safe but also a positive experience for women and their families. It highlights how woman-centred care can optimize the quality of labour and childbirth care through a holistic, human rights-based approach. By outlining a new model of intrapartum care that is adaptable to individual country contexts, the guideline enables substantial cost-savings through reduction in unnecessary interventions during labour and childbirth.

We encourage health care providers to adopt and adapt these recommendations, which provide a sound foundation for the provision of person-centred, evidence-based and comprehensive care for women and their newborn babies.



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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABO	adverse birth outcome
aOR	adjusted odds ratio
CERQual	Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative research
CI	confidence interval
cRCT	cluster randomized controlled trial
CTG	cardiotocography
DOI	declaration of interest
EB	evidence base
EtD	evidence-to-decision
FHR	fetal heart rate
FIGO	International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics
GBS	group B streptococcus
GDG	Guideline Development Group
GRADE	Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation
GRC	Guidelines Review Committee
GREAT	Guideline-driven, Research priorities, Evidence synthesis, Application of evidence, and Transfer of knowledge
HIC	high-income country
HIE	hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HRP	UNDP-UNFPA-UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction
IA	intermittent auscultation
ICM	International Confederation of Midwives
IM	intramuscular
IV	intravenous
LMIC	low- and middle-income country

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