

***GLOSSARY OF PERINATAL TERMS,
CONDITIONS, COMPLICATIONS
AND PROCEDURES FOR
BIRTH CERTIFICATION
PERSONNEL***

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PREGNANCY

GTPAL – abbreviations used to determine pregnancy history: **G**ravida (# of pregnancies), **T**erm (# of babies born > 20 weeks), **P**reterm (# of babies born between 20 and 37 weeks), **A**bstention (# of abortions), **L**iving (# of living children)

Antepartum - time between conception and the onset of labor; usually used to describe the period during which a woman is pregnant.

Abortion - loss of pregnancy before 20 weeks of pregnancy or newborn <500 grams; miscarriage

Amenorrhea - suppression or absence of menstruation

Assisted reproductive technology (ART) - term used to describe the highly technologic approaches used to produce pregnancy in cases of infertility such as insemination or in-vitro fertilization.

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) - a group of diverse medical and healthcare practices and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine including acupuncture/pressure, herbs, and aromatherapy.

Dilation and curettage (D&C) - stretching of the cervical canal to permit passage of an instrument to scrape the inner lining of the uterus to empty the uterus of its contents; used with spontaneous or therapeutic abortions.

Estimated date of birth (EDB) - the approximate date when childbirth will occur; the "due date"; also referred to as estimated date of delivery (EDD).

Fertility enhancing drugs – medications that increase the number of eggs released by the ovary during each monthly cycle such as Clomid™, Parlodel™, Danocrine™, and Progesterone™.

Fundus - the upper portion of the uterus.

Gestation - pregnancy

Gestational age - the number of complete weeks of fetal development, calculated from the first day of the last normal menstrual period to the birth of the newborn.

Gravida - a pregnant woman

Multigravida - woman who has been pregnant more than once.

Multipara - woman who has had more than one pregnancy in which the fetus was viable.

Nulligravida - a woman who has never been pregnant.

Nullipara - a woman who has not given birth to a viable fetus.

Para - a woman who has borne offspring who reach the age of 20 weeks.

Primigravida - a woman who is pregnant for the first time.

Primipara - a woman who has given birth to her first child, whether or not the child is living or was alive at birth.

Trimester - Three months, or one third of the gestational time for pregnancy.

Viability - The potential of the fetus to survive outside the uterus after birth, natural or induced. Fetal viability depends largely on the fetal organ maturity, and environmental conditions. The limit is the gestational age at which a prematurely born fetus/infant has a 50% chance of long-term survival outside its mother's womb usually around 23-24 weeks of pregnancy.

PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS

Asthma – a disorder that causes the airways of the lungs to swell and narrow, leading to wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing.

Chronic hypertension – high blood pressure that occurs before pregnancy or before 20 weeks' of gestation and does not go away after pregnancy.

Diabetes – lifelong (chronic) disease in which there are high levels of sugar in the blood resulting from inadequate amount of insulin.

Eclampsia - a major complication of pregnancy that includes elevated blood pressure and seizures; occurs during pregnancy or within 48 hours after childbirth.

Ectopic pregnancy - Implantation of the fertilized egg outside of the uterus.

Fibroids – noncancerous (benign) tumors that develop in the uterus.

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) - a form of diabetes of variable severity with onset or first recognition during pregnancy.

Hydramnios - an excess of amniotic fluid, leading to overdistention of the uterus; also called polyhydramnios.

Hyperemesis gravidarum - excessive vomiting during pregnancy, leading to dehydration and starvation.

Intrauterine fetal demise (IUFD) – death of the developing fetus after 20 weeks' of pregnancy.

Intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) – fetal undergrowth due to medical problems, poor nutrition, or malformation.

Large for gestational age (LGA) – excessive growth of a fetus in relation to the pregnancy time period; birth weight above the 90th percentile.

Multiple gestation (pregnancy) - more than one fetus in the uterus at the same time.

Oligohydramnios - decreased amount of amniotic fluid, which may indicate a fetal urinary tract defect.

Recurrent pregnancy loss (RPL) - three or more consecutive pregnancy losses before 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Perinatal loss - death of a fetus or infant from the time of conception through the end of the newborn period 28 days after birth.

Preeclampsia - toxemia of pregnancy which includes high blood pressure and swelling.

Pregnancy induced hypertension (PIH) – more recently known as hypertension in pregnancy is a medical condition causing constriction of the blood vessels and decreased oxygen to the fetus as well as the maternal central nervous system. Hypertension is seen as high blood pressure, swelling of the hands and face, and decreased urine output.

Preterm birth - birth that occurs before 37 weeks of pregnancy

Recurrent pregnancy loss (RPL) - three or more consecutive pregnancy losses before 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Small for gestational age (SGA) – inadequate weight or growth for gestational age; birth weight below the 10th percentile.

Spontaneous abortion - abortion that occurs naturally.

Therapeutic abortion - medically induced termination of pregnancy when a malformed fetus is suspected or when the woman's health is in jeopardy.

MATERNAL INFECTIONS

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) - a bacterial infection of the vagina that may cause preterm labor.

Chlamydia – most common sexually transmitted infection that when transmitted to the newborn may cause infection in the eyes and subsequent blindness.

Gonorrhea - a sexually transmitted infection that when transmitted to the newborn may cause infection in the eyes and subsequent blindness.

Group Beta Strep (GBS) – bacteria normally found in a woman’s vagina or bladder that when in contact with the newborn during delivery can cause severe infection and death.

Hepatitis B and C – Chronic liver condition that may cause liver damage or cancer.

Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) – a lifelong, recurrent sexually transmitted infection that when transmitted to the newborn can cause severe infection and illness.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) – a virus that causes a progressive disease that ultimately results in the development of AIDS.

Syphilis – a chronic sexually transmitted infection.

PROCEDURES

Cerclage - surgical procedure in which a stitch is placed in the cervix to prevent a spontaneous abortion or premature birth.

Specialist consultation (perinatologist/maternal-fetal medicine specialist) – physician with special training to care for high-risk pregnant women.

Steroids – medications given to the pregnant woman that improves maturation of the fetal lungs to help baby breath better after birth.

Tocolytics (tocolysis) – medications used to relax the uterus and slow or stop contractions.

Version (external cephalic version - ECV) - procedure involving the external manipulation of the maternal abdomen to change the presentation of the fetus from breech to cephalic.

TESTING

Amniocentesis - removal of amniotic fluid by insertion of a needle into the amniotic sac; amniotic fluid is used to assess fetal health or maturity

Amniotic fluid index (AFI) - a method of reporting the amount of amniotic fluid present during pregnancy or labor.

Biophysical profile (BPP) - assessment of five variables in the fetus that help to evaluate fetal risk.

Chorionic villus sampling (CVS) - procedure in which a specimen is obtained from the placenta at about 8 weeks of pregnancy that can be used for DNA tests.

Contraction stress test (CST) - a method of assessing the reaction of the fetus to the stress of uterine contractions prior to the onset of active labor.

Fetal acoustic stimulation test (FAST) - a fetal assessment test that uses sound from a speaker or bell to stimulate increases of the fetal heart.

Fetal fibronectin (fFN) - a protein that is produced by the fetal tissue whose presence between 20 and 34 weeks of pregnancy is a strong predictor of preterm birth.

Lecithin/sphingomyelin (L/S) ratio - presence in the amniotic fluid indicates mature lungs of the fetus.

Maternal serum alpha-fetoprotein (MSAFP) - screening test performed between 16 and 22 weeks of pregnancy to screen pregnancies for neural tube defects.

Nonstress test (NST) - an assessment method by which the reaction (or response) of the fetal heart rate to fetal movement is evaluated.

Ultrasound - high-frequency sound waves that may be directed into the woman's abdomen. The sound waves reflect the underlying structures allowing identification of fetal tissue, bones, and fluids.

LABOR AND DELIVERY

Active management of labor (AMOL) - medical protocol for labor including (1) a strict criteria for labor admission, (2) early artificial rupture of membranes, (3) high-dose oxytocin infusion for poor contraction pattern, and (4) continuous nursing care.

Amnioinfusion (AI) - procedure used to infuse a sterile fluid through a tube inserted into the uterus in an attempt to increase the fluid around the baby and umbilical cord to decrease or prevent cord compression during labor contractions.

Amniotic fluid - the liquid surrounding the fetus in the uterus. It absorbs shocks, permits fetal movement, and prevents heat loss.

Amniotomy - the artificial rupturing of amniotic membrane (or bag of waters).

Apgar score - a scoring system used to evaluate newborns at 1 minute and 5 minutes after birth to determine transition to outside life and well-being.

Artificial rupture of membranes (AROM) - use of a device such as an amniohook to rupture the amniotic membranes.

Assisted vaginal delivery – the use of any device to assist the woman in giving birth including forceps or vacuum extraction.

Augmentation of labor - the process of causing the labor contractions to become stronger, longer, and closer together by use of medication or surgical rupture of membranes.

Bag of waters (BOW) - term used to describe the membrane containing the amniotic fluid and the fetus.

Birth plan - a written document prepared by the expectant parents that is used to identify available options in the birth setting and aspects of the childbearing experience that are most important to them.

Bishop score - a pre-labor scoring system of the cervix to assist in predicting whether an induction of labor may be successful.

Breech presentation - a birth in which the buttocks and/or feet are presented instead of the head.

Cephalopelvic disproportion - a condition in which the fetal head is of such a shape or size, or in such a position, that it cannot pass through the maternal pelvis.

Cesarean section – surgical process by which the baby is born through an incision in the abdomen and uterus. May be primary-first time or repeat-second or subsequent time.

Doula - a supportive companion who accompanies a laboring woman to provide emotional, physical, and informational support and acts as an advocate for the woman and her family.

Dystocia - difficult labor due to mechanical factors produced by the fetus or the maternal pelvis or due to inadequate contractions.

Effacement - thinning and shortening of the cervix that occurs late in pregnancy or during labor.

Electronic fetal monitoring - a method of placing a fetal monitor on the fetus in order to obtain a continuous tracing of the fetal heart rate, which allows the fetus to be observed and evaluated.

Episiotomy - incision of the perineum (pelvic floor) to facilitate birth and to avoid tears during delivery.

Fetal heart rate (FHR) - the number of times the fetal heart beats per minute; normal range is 120-160.

Fetal scalp electrode (FSE) - electrode inserted into the cervix and attached to the fetal head to allow for more accurate information regarding the fetal heart rate and activity.

Forceps - obstetric instrument occasionally used to aid in childbirth.

Forceps-assisted birth - a birth in which a set of instruments are applied to the presenting part of the fetus to provide traction or to enable the fetal head to be rotated.

Induction of labor - the process of causing or initiating labor by use of medication or surgical rupture of membranes.

Internal version - procedure used for the vaginal birth of a second twin. The obstetrician inserts a hand into the uterus, grasps the feet of the fetus, and changes the fetus from a transverse to a breech presentation.

Intrauterine pressure catheter (IUPC) - a tube placed through the vagina and cervix into the uterus to measure the strength of the uterine contractions. Can also be used to put fluid into the uterus (see amnioinfusion).

Last menstrual period (LMP) - the first day of the last normal menstrual period experienced by the woman before pregnancy; sometimes used to calculate the infant's gestational age.

Leopold's maneuvers - a series of four maneuvers designed to provide a systematic approach to determine fetal position and presentation

Malposition - an abnormal position of the fetus in the birth canal.

Malpresentation - any presentation of the fetus that is not "normal", such as brow, face, shoulder or breech.

Normal spontaneous vaginal delivery (NSVD) – birth of the newborn through the vagina with no mechanical assistance; normal birth.

Nuchal cord - term used to describe the umbilical cord when it is wrapped around the neck of the fetus.

Oxytocin - Hormone normally produced by the body responsible for stimulation of uterine contractions and the release of milk into the breasts.

Pitocin – artificial hormone given to laboring women to begin or increase contractions.

Regional analgesia - the temporary and reversible loss of sensation produced by injection of local anesthetic into an area that comes into direct contact with nervous tissue; epidural or spinal block.

Tocodynamometer - a device placed on the abdomen of the laboring patient in order to assess the frequency, duration, and intensity of the uterine contractions, allows for evaluation of effective labor.

Uterus - the hollow muscular organ where the fertilized egg is implanted and where the fetus develops and is nourished.

Vacuum extraction - a procedure used to assist in the birth of the fetus by applying suction to the fetal head with a soft suction cup attached to a pup.

Vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) - practice of allowing a trial of labor and possible vaginal birth for women following a previous cesarean section.

Vertex presentation - birth in which the fetal head is presenting against the cervix.

LABOR AND DELIVERY COMPLICATIONS

Augmentation of labor - the stimulation of uterine contractions when spontaneous contractions have failed to result in progressive cervical dilation or descent of the fetus.

Abruptio placenta – partial or total separation of a normally implanted placenta.

Amniotic fluid embolism (AFE) - an emergency that occurs when a bubble of amniotic fluid, fetal cells, hair, or other debris enters the maternal circulation and then the maternal lungs. Ends in maternal death in 60-80% of pregnant women.

Apnea - a condition that occurs when respirations cease for more than 20 seconds.

Category II –III FHR tracing – a series of descriptions regarding the fetal heart rate including a decrease in the fetal heart rate and late decelerations indicated distress and potential need for immediate delivery.

Chorioamnionitis – an infection of the amniotic membranes.

Fetal intolerance to labor – diagnosis made when the fetus is unable to maintain a normal heart rate during labor due to the stress caused by contractions.

Induction of labor - the stimulation of uterine contractions before the onset of labor, with or without ruptured fetal membranes, for the purpose of accomplishing birth.

Intrauterine resuscitation – a series of interventions to optimize the amount of oxygen getting to the fetus including turning the woman on her side, increasing fluids, and providing oxygen via mask.

Meconium (staining of amniotic fluid) – the first stool passed by the newborn sometimes occurring during labor in the amniotic fluid causing staining. May cause distress for the newborn if inhaled shortly after birth.

Operative delivery – refers to a delivery in which the physician uses forceps or a vacuum device to assist the mother in birthing of the fetus.

Placenta accreta - abnormal adherence of the placenta to the uterine wall.

Placenta increta - a high-risk condition that occurs when the placenta attaches to the uterine wall and invades the uterine muscle.

Placenta percreta - a high-risk condition that occurs when the placenta penetrates the uterine muscle, sometimes attaching to the structures in the abdomen oftentimes resulting in a hysterectomy.

Placenta previa - abnormal implantation of the placenta covering the opening of the cervix.

Placental abruption – see abruptio placenta

Placental insufficiency/late decelerations – a decrease in the fetal heart rate beginning at or after the peak of the contraction and returning to the baseline after the contraction has ended indicating that the placenta is not working sufficiently and the fetus is not receiving enough oxygen.

Postterm labor/pregnancy - labor that occurs or pregnancy that continues after 42 weeks of gestation.

Precipitous birth - rapid progression of labor or one in which no physician is present.

Precipitous labor - labor lasting less than 3 hours.

Premature rupture of membranes (PROM) - rupture of the amniotic sac/fluid greater than 12 hours before labor begins.

Preterm labor – labor contractions that occur before 37 weeks of pregnancy.

Prolonged labor - labor lasting more than 24 hours.

Prolapsed cord – umbilical cord that becomes trapped in the vagina before the fetus is born.

Retained placenta - retention of the placenta beyond 30 minutes after birth.

Rupture of membranes (ROM) - bag of waters surrounding the fetus has broken and leaking of fluid is evident. May be SROM (spontaneous) or AROM (artificial) and occur before labor or contractions begin.

Ruptured uterus - a non-surgical opening into the uterine cavity.

Stillbirth - the birth of a dead infant.

Third/Fourth degree lacerations – tears in the vaginal tissue, perineal skin, and perineal muscles that extends into the anal sphincter (the muscle that surrounds the anus), fourth degree goes through the anal sphincter.

Thrombophlebitis - inflammation of a vein wall, resulting in clot formation.

Uterine inversion - prolapse of the uterine fundus through the cervix into the vagina.

TREATMENT AND PROCEDURES

Epidural block - Anesthesia medications inserted around the spinal column causing numbness and decreased pain sensation during labor and birth.

Hysterectomy - surgical removal of the uterus.

Spinal block - injection of a local anesthetic agent directly into the spinal fluid in the spinal canal to provide relief from pain during childbirth.

Steroids – medications given to the pregnant woman that improves maturation of the fetal lungs to help baby breath better after birth.

Tocolytics (tocolysis) – medications used to relax the uterus and slow or stop contractions.

Version (external cephalic version - ECV) - procedure involving the external manipulation of the maternal abdomen to change the presentation of the fetus from breech to cephalic.

NEWBORN PROCEDURES AND COMPLICATIONS

Anencephaly – A serious birth defect in which the baby is born without parts of the brain and skull.

Aortic stenosis - The aorta is the main artery carrying blood out of the heart. When blood leaves the heart, it flows through the aortic valve, into the aorta. In aortic stenosis, the aortic valve does not open fully. This decreases blood flow from the heart.

Assisted ventilation - mechanical means to support the newborn's breathing until the newborn's respiratory efforts are sufficient on their own.

Atresia – a condition in which a body opening or passage in the body is abnormally closed or absent.

Chromosomal disorder - abnormalities affecting the **chromosomes** that result in syndromes having characteristic physical or functional anomalies

Cleft lip – a condition where the upper lip is not completely formed causing an opening between the mouth and nose.

Cleft palate – abnormal opening/connection between the roof of the mouth and the nasal cavity

Congenital anomalies - Physical, metabolic, or anatomic abnormalities in the normal pattern of development that is apparent at birth or detected during the first year of life.

Congenital diaphragmatic hernia – portion of the intestines move into the chest cavity through an abnormal opening in the diaphragm.

Cyanotic congenital heart disease - a structural defect of the heart causing decreased oxygen in the newborn circulation.

Down's syndrome – Down syndrome is a genetic condition in which a person has 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46.

Gastroschisis – opening in the abdominal wall that allows the intestines to be pushed outside of the body.

Hypospadias – placement of the urinary opening of the male on the underside of the penis instead of the tip of the penis.

Limb reduction defect - defects that occur when a part of or the entire arm (upper limb) or leg (lower limb) of a fetus fails to form completely during pregnancy.

Meningomyelocele/Spina bifida – saclike cyst containing the spinal cord and nerve roots in the lower area of the back.

Omphalocele – herniation of the abdominal contents into the base of the umbilical cord.

Pulmonary stenosis - Pulmonary stenosis is a heart disorder that involves the pulmonary valve. This valve separates the right ventricle (one of the chambers in the heart) and the pulmonary artery. The pulmonary artery carries oxygen-poor blood to the lungs. Stenosis, or narrowing, occurs when the valve cannot open wide enough. As a result, less blood flows to the lungs.

Sepsis - an illness in which the body has a severe response to bacteria or other germs.

Surfactant replacement therapy - treatment for preterm/premature newborns whereby a synthetic compound is given to help keep the alveoli (area of the lungs where oxygen is exchanged) from collapsing.

POSTPARTUM

Adjustment reaction with depressed mood - reaction occurring in the first few postpartum days, characterized by mild depression, tearfulness, anxiety, headache, and irritability; postpartum blues

Afterpains – cramp-like pains due to contractions of the uterus that occur after childbirth

Attachment - Enduring bonds or relationship of affection between mother and baby.

Bereavement - to have suffered the event of loss

Bonding - process of parent-infant attachment occurring at or soon after birth.

Endometritis - infection of the inner surface of the uterus.

Engorgement - The swelling of breast tissue brought about by an increase in blood supply to the breast caused by lactation.

Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) - Fetal condition caused by maternal alcohol use.

Late preterm infant - an infant born between 34 and 37 weeks of gestation.

Macrosomia - a condition seen in newborns of large body size and high birth weight (more than 4000-4500 grams or 8 lbs 13 oz - 9 lbs 14 oz).

Mastitis - inflammation of the breast

Postpartum depression - severe depression that occurs within the first year after giving birth.

Postpartum hemorrhage - A loss of blood of greater than 500 ml following birth.

Puerperal infection - infection of the reproductive tract associated with childbirth and occurring any time up to 6 weeks postpartum.

Sterilization - a term that refers to surgical procedures that permanently prevent pregnancy.

Tubal ligation - sterilization of a woman accomplished by cutting or blocking the fallopian tubes.

Uterine atony - relaxation of uterine muscle tone following birth.

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