

Asphyxia Information Sheet

Definition of Asphyxia

A baby who has at birth **any one** of the following symptoms is asphyxiated:

- no cry
- weak cry
- no breathing
- gasping
- weak breathing

If a baby has asphyxia, the first 5 minutes after delivery are an emergency. A life can be saved or lost in these 5 minutes.

Consequences of Asphyxia

Immediate (at birth)

- Stillbirth
- Drowsy
- Unable to suckle
- Baby may die within first few days

Long term

If the baby survives it may have:

- Mental retardation
- Epilepsy (seizures and fits)
- Spasticity (difficulty with walking or moving arms and hands)

Warning of asphyxia during labour :

1. Prolonged or difficult labour
2. Ruptured membranes with little fluid (dry delivery)
3. Green or yellow coloured thick amniotic fluid
4. Prolapsed cord or tight cord around the neck
5. Preterm labour (less than 8 months 14 days gestation)
6. Breech presentation (or other abnormal presentation)

Be prepared for asphyxia in ALL deliveries

Keep ready the following :

- ✓ **Towels or clean cloths and blankets for baby**
- ✓ **Mucus extractor**
- ✓ **Bag and mask**

Before the delivery : Check that it is clean and dry.

Make sure it is working properly.