

MATERNAL CARE

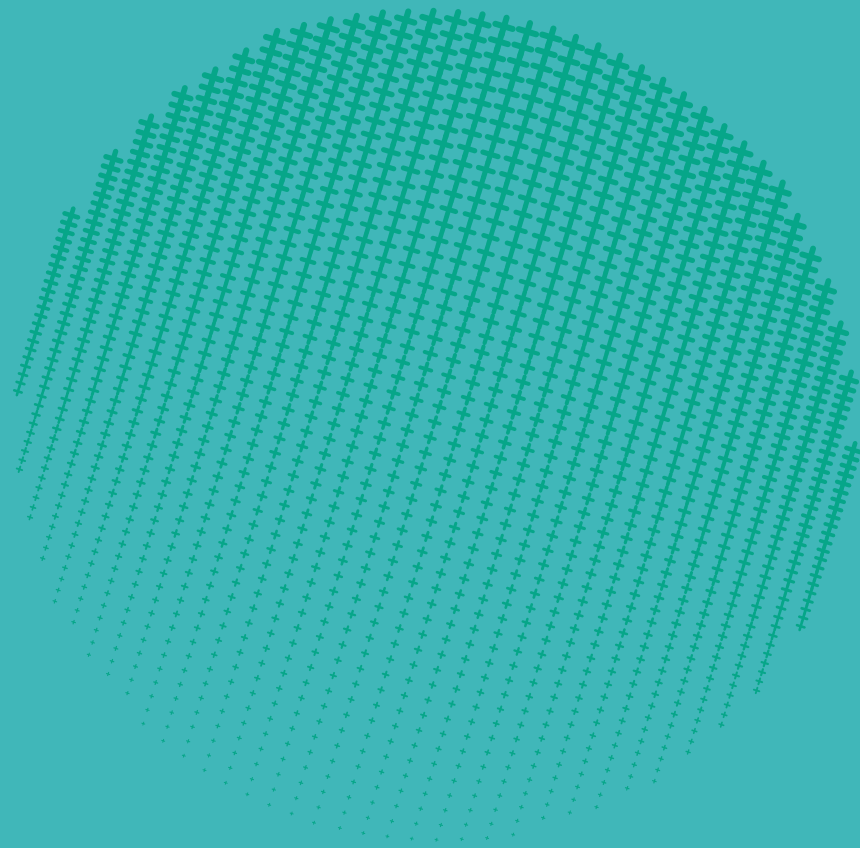
Dr. Kohe Alexandre
Gynaecologist

This presentation focuses on **Labour Process** – A woman's journey to birth.



Table of Contents

1	Introduction	6	Labor Positions That Aid Progress
2	Stage 1: Early Labour - The Beginning	7	Pain Relief Options During Labour
3	Stage 1 – Active Labour – Building Momentum	8	The Role of Support and Environment
4	Stage 2: Pushing and Delivery	9	Immediate Postpartum: The Golden Hour
5	Stage 3: Delivery of the Placenta	10	Conclusion



Introduction

Labour is the process by which the uterus contracts to expel the baby and placenta from the womb. It unfolds in three stages:

Delivery, in its simplest form, refers to the culmination of this process — the birth of a child, either vaginally or through a caesarean section.

It is a natural process, yet one fraught with risk, particularly where health systems are weak.

Reflection Question:

How does knowing what to expect during labour and delivery change the way a mother and her support system prepare for birth?

Common Complications in Low-Resource Settings



Postpartum Hemorrhage (PPH): The leading cause of maternal death worldwide. In Kenya, it contributes to nearly **40% of maternal deaths**.

Solution: Immediate uterine massage, uterotonic drugs (oxytocin, misoprostol), and quick referral when blood loss is severe.

Prolonged or Obstructed Labour: Without timely intervention, women face uterine rupture, obstetric fistula, or stillbirth.

Solution: Monitoring with the **partograph**, assisted deliveries, and emergency caesarean sections where possible.

Maternal Infections (Sepsis): Often linked to unclean deliveries or prolonged rupture of membranes.

Solution: Clean birth practices, antibiotics, and timely removal of retained products.

Hypertensive Disorders (Preeclampsia/Eclampsia): Responsible for **one in six maternal deaths in Kenya**.

Solution: Use of magnesium sulfate and antihypertensive drugs, alongside timely delivery.

Fetal Distress and Birth Asphyxia: A major cause of newborn deaths. In Kenya, **birth asphyxia accounts for nearly 30% of neonatal mortality**.

Solution: Fetal monitoring and newborn resuscitation using bag-and-mask ventilation.

Retained Placenta: Can cause both hemorrhage and infection.

Solution: Controlled cord traction and, if needed, manual removal under aseptic conditions.

The Power of Birth Preparedness

Behind every safe delivery is not just clinical skill, but **planning**.

Birth preparedness and complication readiness (BPCR) is a strategy that encourages women and families to anticipate potential risks and make arrangements in advance. It includes:

- Choosing a delivery facility with skilled staff.
- Saving money for emergency costs.
- Planning transport to reach a health facility quickly.
- Identifying potential blood donors.
- Recognizing danger signs such as severe bleeding, convulsions, or prolonged labour.

Research shows that women with a clear birth preparedness plan are more likely to deliver in health facilities and to seek timely care when emergencies arise.



Stage 1: Early Labour – The Beginning

Early labour is the longest phase, where your body prepares for birth. It's about gradual changes, not intense rushes.

Cervical Changes

Cervix thins (effaces) and dilates to 3-4 cm, slowly opening the path.

Contraction Rhythm

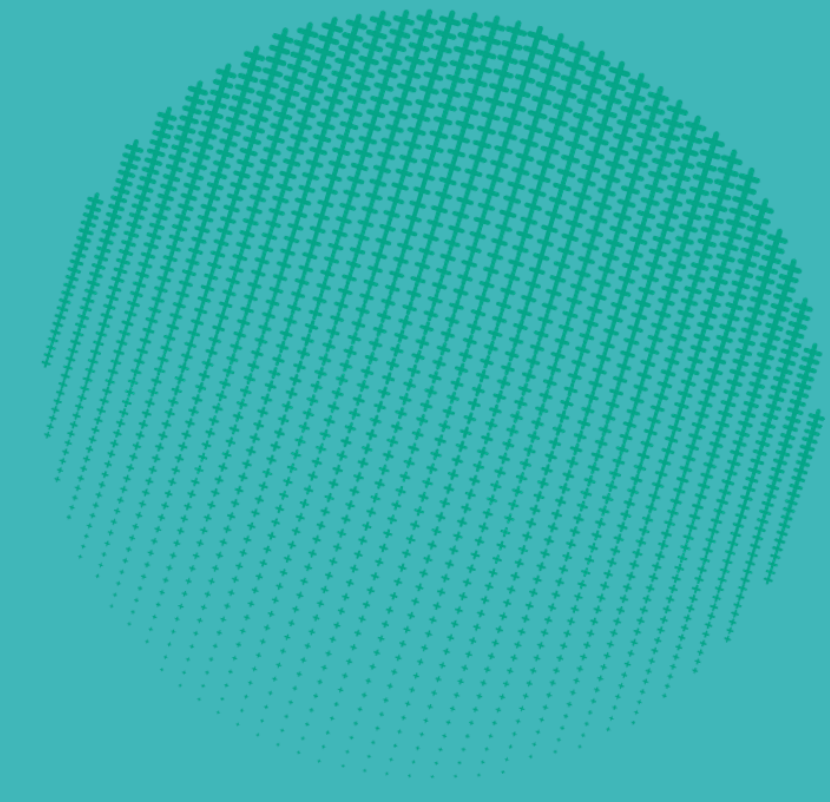
Mild to moderate contractions, 30-60 seconds long, 5-20 minutes apart.

Duration

Can last up to 20 hours, especially for first-time mothers..

Key Signs

Mild backache, pelvic pressure, and clear or slightly bloody discharge ("show").



Stage 1: Active Labour – Building Momentum

Active labour marks a significant progression, demanding focus and strength. Contractions become more purposeful



Cervical Dilation:

From 4 cm to a full 10 cm, preparing for baby's arrival

Intensifying Contractions:

Stronger, lasting about 60 seconds, occurring every 3-5 minutes

Baby's Descent:

The baby begins to move down into the birth canal

Physical Sensations: Increased pressure in the lower back and pelvis as the baby descends

Mental Focus: Women often enter a deep state of concentration as they work with their body



Stage 2: Pushing and Delivery

This is the stage you've been waiting for—the active work of bringing your baby into the world.

Full Dilation

Cervix is fully dilated to 10 cm, and you'll feel a strong urge to push

Crowning

Baby's head becomes visible at the vaginal opening—the "crowning" moment.

Pushing Duration

Can range from 20 minutes to several hours, often longer for first births

Baby's Arrival

With guidance, the baby is born, and the umbilical cord is typically cut shortly after



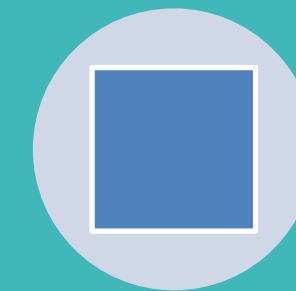
Stage 3: Delivery of the Placenta

The final, often overlooked, stage ensures your body completes the birth process safely.



Placenta Separation:

The placenta detaches from the uterine wall, typically delivered within 30 minutes after birth.



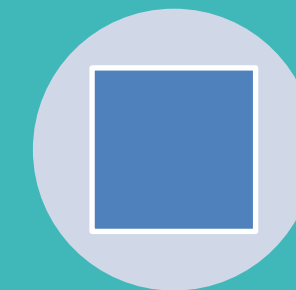
Provider Support:

Your healthcare provider may assist with gentle cord traction and uterine massage to prevent excessive bleeding.



Mild Contractions:

You'll continue to experience mild contractions to aid in placenta expulsion.



Post-Delivery Sensations:

Some women experience chills or shakiness as hormones shift

Labor Positions That Aid Progress

Movement and position changes can significantly impact comfort and progress during labour



Supported Squat

Opens pelvis by up to 15%, uses gravity, eases contractions.



Walking

Encourages baby's descent, reduces back pain, leverages gravity.



Side-Lying

Good for rest, helps oxygen flow to baby, lowers tearing risk.



Sitting & Toilet Sitting

Rest and pelvic relaxation, gravity-assisted.

Pain Relief Options During Labour

Managing discomfort is a key aspect of a positive birth experience. Various options are available, both natural and medical.

Natural Methods

- Movement and position changes
- Breathing techniques
- Warm baths or showers
- Birthing balls and massage

These methods help you cope with pain by promoting relaxation and natural endorphin release.

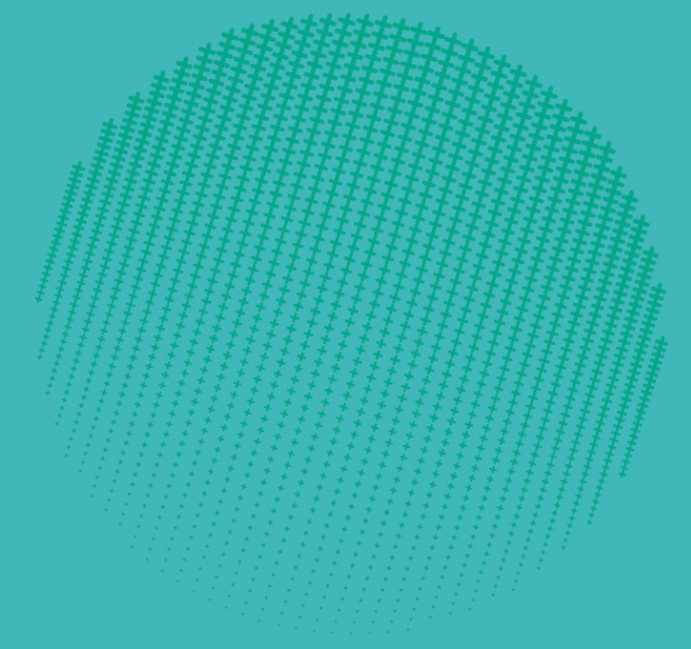
Remember, choosing pain relief is personal, and your preferences can change throughout labour. Continuous support from doulas or partners also significantly improves comfort and outcomes.

Medical Options

- TENS machine (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation)
- Entonox (gas and air)
- Epidural (including walking epidural)
- Opioid pain relief

Medical interventions offer stronger pain relief and can be adjusted as labour progresses.

The Role of Support and Environment



A supportive presence and a calming environment are crucial for a positive labour experience.

Continuous Support

Emotional and physical support from loved ones or professionals reduces labour length and perceived pain.

Calm Surroundings

A peaceful, familiar environment helps the birthing person relax and focus inward.

Freedom to Move

Encouragement to move and change positions as labour progresses can aid comfort and efficiency

Vital Guidance

The presence of a partner, doula, or midwife provides reassurance and expert guidance throughout

Immediate Postpartum: The Golden Hour

The first hour after birth is a magical and crucial time for bonding and initial recovery.

Skin-to-Skin Contact: Initiated immediately, it promotes bonding, regulates baby's temperature, and aids in breastfeeding initiation.

First Breastfeeding: Midwives provide support to help with the baby's first latch within this hour, establishing feeding.

Baby's Checks: Essential vital checks, measurements, and vaccinations usually follow this undisturbed bonding time.

Mother's Monitoring: Healthcare providers closely monitor the mother for bleeding and begin the initial phase of recovery.



Respectful and Dignified Care

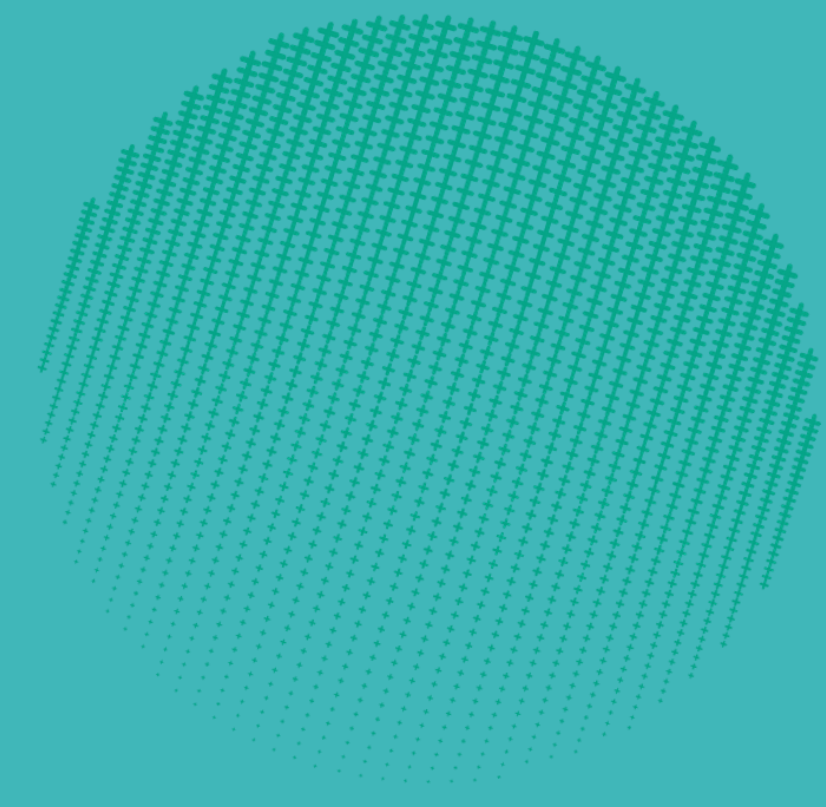
Yet safety alone is not enough. **The quality of a woman's experience matters.**

- Respectful maternity care means:
- Seeing the woman, not just the patient.
- Seeking consent before procedures.
- Protecting privacy and cultural preferences.
- Allowing a supportive companion during labour.
- Treating every woman equally, regardless of age, income, or status.

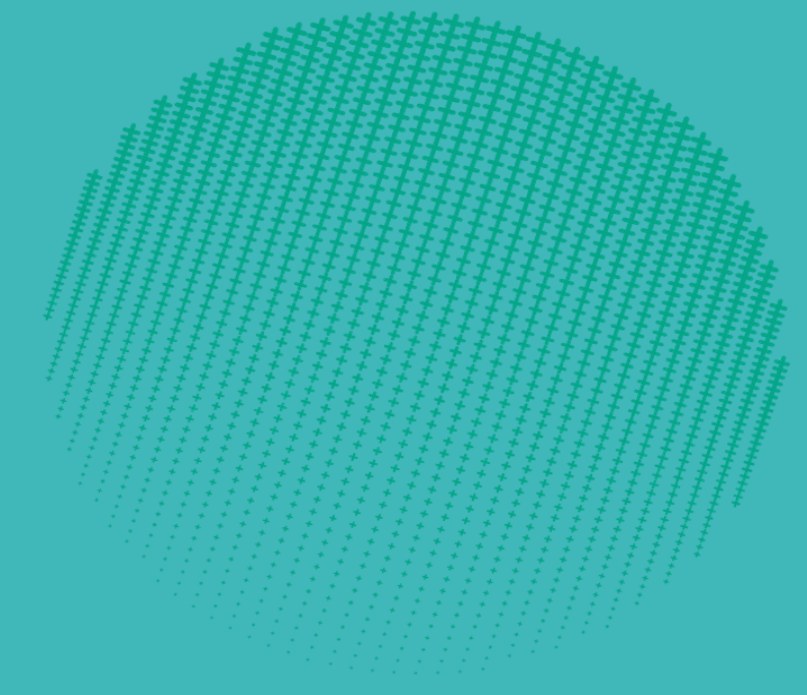
Safe birth, therefore, is not only the absence of death — it is the **presence of dignity.**

Every birth should be remembered for the cry of a newborn and the relief on a mother's face — not the silence of preventable loss.

Because childbirth, at its core, is not just a medical event. It is a moment of **hope, humanity, and renewal.** And no woman, anywhere, should have to risk her life to bring forth life.



Conclusion



Trusting the Body's Wisdom

"Labour unfolds uniquely for every woman, yet it follows a natural, predictable process. Understanding each stage and the available options empowers women to make informed choices that align with their desires."

Movement, support, and pain management are key tools to enhance comfort and progress throughout this incredible journey. It culminates in the profound, life-changing moment of meeting your baby.



THANK YOU

CONTACTS

Phone No:
+254724468728

Website

<https://www.flourishcounsellingservices.co.ke/>

Email
info@flourishcounsellingservices.co.ke