

Community Education Fact Sheet: Preventing postpartum hemorrhage

Preparing for the upcoming birth of a baby

Preparing for birth with a skilled birth attendant:

- Make plans to give birth with a skilled birth attendant
- Decide birth plan issues
- Prepare what is needed for birth
- Save money

Preparing in case of a complication:

- Learn about danger signs before, during and after childbirth
- Establish a savings plan/scheme
- Make a plan for decision-making in case an emergency occurs while the primary decision-maker is away.
- Arrange in advance for transportation in case of emergency
- Arrange for a blood donor in case of need

Helping to prevent problems during and after childbirth

Every woman in labour deserves special attention, because although most labours and deliveries progress normally, there is always a risk of something going wrong. Many dangers can be avoided if the woman goes to a skilled birth attendant when she first thinks she is in labour. Having a skilled birth attendant assist during childbirth and check on the woman and newborn in the first 12 hours after childbirth reduces the chance of either the woman or the baby becoming ill or dying.

Who is a skilled birth attendant?

A skilled attendant is a community midwife, nurse, midwife, or doctor who can:

- Take care of normal (uncomplicated) pregnancies, childbirth and the immediate postnatal period, and
- Identify, treat and refer any complications the woman and newborn may have.

Community health workers who have not been educated and trained in caring for women during pregnancy, labour, and childbirth are not considered skilled birth attendants.

How will giving birth with a skilled provider prevent problems and reduce the likelihood that women will lose too much blood after giving birth?

During and immediately after childbirth, the skilled birth attendant knows:

- When medical help is required and how to obtain it;
- What care to give if the woman or baby has a problem;
- When labour has gone on for too long and when a move to a hospital is necessary;
- If treatment or injections / tablets are necessary to speed labor up;
- What to do during labour, childbirth, and after the baby is born to prevent the woman from losing too much blood;
- How to deliver the afterbirth (placenta) safely – she / he will give the woman an injection or a tablet immediately after birth of the baby that will help the afterbirth separate from the womb (uterus) and then deliver the afterbirth;
- How to massage the woman's womb immediately after the afterbirth is delivered and to teach the woman how to do this herself;
- How to check the woman for vaginal bleeding after birth.

How can women and their partners / families help to prevent bleeding too much after giving birth?

Women and their families can do the following to help the woman have a safe pregnancy and birth and bring a healthy newborn into the world:

- Regularly seek antenatal care and take preventive measures against anaemia and malaria;
- Prepare for birth and in case of complications;
- Go to or call the skilled birth attendant as soon as labour starts or the waters break, whichever comes first;
- Do not take any tablets / herbal remedies to speed labour up;
- Give birth with a skilled birth attendant.