

# BIRTH IN PLACE

## Patch Activity Book

for GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES & GIRL GUIDES OF CANADA



[AdvantageMidwifery.org](http://AdvantageMidwifery.org)

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# OVERVIEW

**Labor and birth happen.** Sometimes labor goes quickly or speeds up suddenly and the baby is born before professional help is near. Sometimes natural disasters like tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, blizzards or earthquakes, prevent people from reaching professional help before giving birth.

Most births, particularly those that happen rapidly, are uncomplicated. Support can be provided by any calm person. Knowing how to support birth can help you remain calm, so that you can be helpful.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Practice techniques for helping someone in labor
2. Know steps to calmly call for help if the baby is coming
3. Learn to assist when the baby is born and just after
4. Help maintain warmth and safety after the baby is born

## ABOUT THE PATCH ACTIVITY

The Birth in Place Patch was originally released in conjunction with the 2018 annual meeting of the American College of Nurse-Midwives in Savannah, Georgia, the home of Juliette Gordon Lowe, the founder of the Girl Scouts USA. The Birth in Place Patch gives a scout the opportunity to learn enough about uncomplicated birth to provide emergency assistance. In learning about birth and immediate newborn care, the scout also learns about careers in women's health. Any troop can use this patch.

The patch was developed by Cecilia M. Jevitt, CNM, PhD, FACNM, and Maura S. McCallister, MA in August, 2017, and released publicly at [AdvantageMidwifery.org](http://AdvantageMidwifery.org). The handbook was last reviewed and updated in March 2024 through **Step Up Together**, a program of Primary Maternity Care. ([www.primarymaternitycare.com](http://www.primarymaternitycare.com))

# HOW TO HELP SOMEONE IN LABOR

Encourage and reassure them. If you **stay calm**, they will be calmer.

**Call 911** for emergency help if you are able.

Find a **private, comfortable place** for the laboring person. They might be comfortable walking around. They might be comfortable on hands and knees, rocking back and forth a little, or sitting down or resting on their side. They can move around as much as they want.

Gather any available supplies together for the birth. See **WAYS AND SUPPLIES TO HELP**

They might be thirsty and can **drink water or other drinks**. If they are warm from the work of labor, you can **fan them with anything that will move air**. You can also **find a cloth, wet it and dab their face**.

They will breathe heavily as if running a marathon. You can help them by asking them to breathe slowly. **Coach them to breathe slowly** and take deep breaths.



Every 2 to 3 minutes, the *uterus*– the muscle around the baby– will squeeze to push the baby down and out. This is called a *contraction*. People in labor will usually have a look of concentration on their face and might say that it hurts. Hold their hand and **encourage them during the contractions**.

The fluid around the newborn is called the *amniotic fluid*, or the bag of water. The bag of water might break before the baby is born. The amniotic fluid is usually clear but might be yellow or greenish. Put some towels of something absorbent under them to catch the amniotic fluid in case the bag of water breaks. If you have a large plastic garbage bag under the towels, everything stays drier.

## GETTING THE PERSON GIVING BIRTH COMFORTABLE

Cover them with a blanket or a large piece of clothing. Help them remove any pants or underwear so that there is room for the baby to be born. When giving birth, it is important to feel safe, even in a public place with limited privacy. You can help with this by staying nearby and offering ways to keep privacy, like bringing blankets or something to cover up with.



## HOW TO HELP WHEN THE BABY COMES

**You don't need to do anything special to help the baby be born.** The contractions of the uterus and the birthing person's pushing will move the baby out.

The baby's head will usually be born first, then the body. **You don't have to do anything special if you see the *umbilical cord* around the baby's neck.** This happens to about 1 in 4 babies. The baby won't strangle on the cord.

Have dry cloths ready to **wipe the baby dry.** Toss the wet cloths away from the baby.

The baby might look a little blue when it's born. That will change when it cries. **Put the baby skin-to-skin** with its parent. The baby can rest on its belly on either parent's chest or abdomen.

**Cover the newborn with dry blankets or cloths.** The new parent will keep the baby warm if it stays skin-to-skin.

If the baby has fluid or mucus oozing from its nose or mouth, **gently wipe it away.**

If the baby isn't breathing well or crying, you can rub its back with a dry cloth or flick the soles of its feet. **Crying helps the baby breathe deeply** and clear the amniotic fluid out of its mouth and lungs.



## WAYS AND SUPPLIES TO HELP

NEED	WHAT YOU CAN DO	SUPPLIES THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE
<b>Privacy</b>	Find something to cover the person up. Close doors or curtains. Ask people who are not involved and being helpful to leave.	A large piece of cloth or clothing that could provide coverage from waist to knees.
<b>Comfort</b>	Find items that can provide comforts like cool air, warmth, hydration. Hold the person's hand or give a massage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Washcloth</li> <li>b. Dish towel</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	<p>Call for help from 911 or other helpful adults.</p> <p>Find something absorbent to soak up fluids, and something waterproof to put underneath.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A large plastic trash bag</li> <li>b. A shower curtain</li> <li>c. Towels</li> <li>d. A blanket or large cloth</li> </ul>
<b>Warmth of newborn</b>	Locate something to dry the baby, and something dry that can be used to cover the baby	<p><b>To dry the baby:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Dry bath towels or dish towels</li> <li>b. Small blanket</li> <li>c. Paper towels</li> </ul> <p><b>To cover baby:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Small blankets</li> <li>b. Dry bath towels or dish towels</li> <li>c. Pieces of soft clothing</li> </ul>



# HOW TO HELP AFTER THE BABY IS BORN

**Don't tug on the umbilical cord.** The contractions will continue until they push the placenta out. This might take 5 to 30 minutes.

Babies lose heat easily. **Keep the baby covered.** Make sure the covering is away from the baby's face so that it can breathe easily.

If the baby is lip-smacking or opening its mouth and moving its head around, it might be hungry. If the new parent wants to breastfeed, they can put the baby's mouth right to the nipple and it will probably start sucking. New babies have reflexes that help them suck and swallow as soon as they are born.



## THE PLACENTA

The placenta is an organ that circulates blood, oxygen and nutrients to the baby. It is attached to the baby by the umbilical cord. The placenta looks like a small liver. About 5 to 20 minutes after the baby is born, the parent will push the placenta out.

The placenta can stay attached to the baby until help arrives. **You don't need to do anything with the cord.** When the placenta is out, it can simply stay attached to the baby until professional help arrives. You can wrap it in another cloth or a bag and tuck it next to the baby. The cord should only be cut with a sterile blade.



## PREVENTING HEAT LOSS

Babies lose heat in 4 ways: evaporation, conduction, convection and radiation. This table describes these and what you can do to help keep the newborn baby warm.

HEAT LOSS	HOW TO KEEP NEWBORN WARM
<b>EVAPORATION</b> A wet baby loses heat as its skin dries. Evaporating amniotic fluid takes heat with it.	Dry the baby immediately after birth with a dry cloth. Toss wet cloths away from the baby.
<b>CONDUCTION</b> A baby placed on a cold surface loses heat to the cold surface.	Put the baby skin-to-skin with its parent. Labor uses a lot of energy, which raises the body's temperature.
<b>CONVECTION</b> A baby loses heat in a cold, drafty room. Cold air blowing over the baby cools the baby.	Make the place of birth as warm and draft free as possible for the newborn.
<b>RADIATION</b> A baby loses heat to a colder surrounding room. If you live in a home with a radiator, think about how the radiator loses heat to the room, making it warm.	Make the place of birth warm for the newborn. The new parent radiates heat through their skin to the newborn to keep the newborn warm.



# BIRTH IN PLACE PATCH

for GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES & GIRL GUIDES OF CANADA



## **PURPOSE OF THE BIRTH IN PLACE PATCH**

The Birth in Place Patch gives a scout the opportunity to learn enough about uncomplicated birth to provide emergency assistance. In learning about birth and immediate newborn care, the scout can also learn about careers in women's health. All readings, worksheets, instructions and videos for this patch will be available free online at [AdvantageMidwifery.org](http://AdvantageMidwifery.org) and [PrimaryMaternityCare.com](http://PrimaryMaternityCare.com).

## **TARGETED AGES**

Seniors (10-11 years) and Ambassadors (11-12 years)

## **HOW TO EARN THIS PATCH**

### **Choose two of these discovery activities:**

- Read the Birth in Place instructional materials.
- Read the information and instructions about caring for a newborn immediately after birth.
- Work with a group. Each scout visits one or more of these websites and investigates how the organization works to improve birth and newborn safety. Scouts then report back to the group describing the organization they investigated. ***Suggested organizations listed below.***

### **Complete two of these skills-building activities:**

- Watch the film on birth in place. (A link to a free video filmed for this patch will be provided.)
- Complete the birth and the newborn care worksheets
- Complete the birth and newborn word search.
- Invite a midwife, labor and birth nurse or obstetrician to visit with your troop.
- Practice helping during a birth with a skill drill. (Instructions for drill and skills checklist will be available free online.)
- Make an emergency birth kit by gathering the equipment listed in "Birth in Place."

### **Complete one of these activities:**

- Interview a labor and birth nurse, a midwife, doula or an obstetrician about birth and why they chose women's health care as a career.
- Help a mother with a baby who is less than 6 months old. Ask the mother about feeding the infant and what the infant has learned to do. Change a diaper.
- Talk to someone who has given birth. Ask them what the birth was like. Find out what they think would have helped them to be more comfortable during labor.

**Complete one of these service activities:**

- Collect gently used baby clothes and blankets. Wash them and fold them for donation to a women's center or refugee service.
- Have a fundraiser for an organization that supports healthy birth. Suggested organizations include:
  - **March of Dimes** [www.marchofdimes.org](http://www.marchofdimes.org)
  - **Every Mother Counts** [www.everymothercounts.org](http://www.everymothercounts.org)
  - **Maternity Worldwide** [www.maternityworldwide.org](http://www.maternityworldwide.org)
  - **Save the Children** [www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)
  - **Partners in Health** [www.pih.org](http://www.pih.org)
  - **Doctors Without Borders** [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org)
  - **JHPIEGO, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University** [www.jhpiego.org](http://www.jhpiego.org)

# WORKSHEET: How To Help Someone In Labor

1. Describe what happens during labor.
2. What might keep someone from having professional help with them during labor and birth?
3. List the supplies to gather if a baby will be born in place.
4. Name at least three things you can do to reassure a person giving birth.
5. How can you help someone prepare for their baby's birth?

# WORKSHEET: Care Of The Newborn Immediately After Birth

1. What does a baby need immediately to stay alive?

2. What should you do for the baby immediately after birth? Put the steps in order.

3. Does a baby need help breathing if it is crying?

Circle one: YES NO

4. Does a baby need help breathing if it is mostly pink but quiet and looking around?

Circle one: YES NO

5. Describe how you put a newborn skin to skin.

6. List four ways newborns lose heat. Then, list one way to keep a baby warm based on each way to lose heat.

<b>How a Newborn Loses Heat</b>	<b>How to Keep the Newborn Warm</b>

# WORD SEARCH

d u n t y a d b a n v n b j s  
r e p p v m r p l p k j e v a  
y s x o j n o j l u f f w p m  
c s r n s i c e f a e o c b w  
l z x m b o l b t v c o e v n  
o g n i h t a e r b p e e d h  
t x g r s i c c e n x q n t c  
h j o f a c i g t h t r o t o  
t i f e w f l c n o e l r c a  
e s a i e l i x a a c x y n l  
v r e t u u b l s l p i n k u  
k h i h o i m s o a a o h i c  
v a m b c d u o n r o b w e n  
w h k k l r c o l d d r i n k  
r v w h e t y n q f m o x l q

**Each of the words in bold below are hidden in the word scramble above**

My neighbor called me to come next door and help her. She was expecting a baby and said she was in labor. She had been waiting for her husband to come home and take her to the hospital. She was breathing hard and rubbing her belly. She said the labor got fast and it felt like the baby was coming. She had called the ambulance but they weren't here yet.

I wanted to **reassure** her. I helped her sit on the couch and got a **cold drink** of water for her. I still didn't hear the ambulance. I got my neighbor a wet, **cool cloth** and wiped her face with it. She was breathing so fast and hard. I

asked her to breathe slowly with me. We did **deep breathing** together, slow deep breaths.

Suddenly, she said “the baby is coming, right now!” The ambulance still wasn't here. I helped my neighbor take her pants off. She started making pushing sounds. She had me open the bag she packed for the hospital. There were some baby blankets in the bag. She told me to run to the bathroom and get some towels. We put them under her hips. Then there was a gush of water– the **amniotic fluid**.

My neighbor was pushing and she said the baby would be here soon. She told me to hold the baby when it came out. She pushed a little more and the baby was out. I took a **dry cloth** and wiped the **newborn** dry. Its hands and feet were a little **blue** but then it started to cry. I put the baby on the mother's **chest** under her blouse. It still had the **umbilical cord**. I knew to **wait** for the **placenta**. My neighbor told me not to pull on the cord. I took the baby blankets and covered the baby with them so it would stay warm. Now it was **pink** and blinking its eyes at me. I didn't need to **wash** the baby, just keep it warm with its mother.

Right about then, the ambulance pulled in front of the house. The paramedics were surprised when they walked through the door and said to me, "You did a birth in place!"



# REFERENCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

[ACNM Emergency Preparedness for Childbirth](#)

[CDC Safety Messages for Pregnant, Postpartum, and Breastfeeding People During Natural Disasters and Severe Weather](#)

[AIM Obstetric Emergency Readiness Resource Kit](#)

## Videos

### Accidental car births:

- Baby birth in the car <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycvVYN0aPrs> (These people were going to a birth center, the father of the baby stays calm and is reassuring.)
- Birth in an Uber [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gxhrnp\\_Sdcw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gxhrnp_Sdcw) (Note: This video has language that parents may not find suitable for children.)

### Training videos

Basic educational training videos for nurses and midwives in how to conduct a birth (Note: these videos show vaginal birth uncensored.)

- Birthing the Baby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lScUirHj9Ls>
- Positions for Birth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOqu9ncdAdE>

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## **Acknowledgements**

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Activities	Date Completed	Leader's Initials
<p><b>Choose two of these discovery activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the Birth in Place instructional materials.</li> <li>• Read the information and instructions about caring for a newborn immediately after birth.</li> <li>• Work with a group. Each scout visits one or more of these websites and investigates how the organization works to improve birth and newborn safety. Scouts then report back to the group describing the organization they investigated. <b>Suggested organizations listed above.</b></li> </ul>		
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<p><b>Complete one of these service activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect gently used baby clothes and blankets. Wash them and fold them for donation to a women’s center or refugee service.</li> <li>• Have a fundraiser for an organization that supports healthy birth.</li> </ul>		