



## E) Completion Birthing



- When your cervix is fully open some lucky women experience a pause in their labour. Not everyone experiences this time to rest and you may find that the feeling of pressure at the end of your transition builds until you can't help but bear down.
- As you reach this bearing down phase, the muscles of your uterus have finished pulling up to open the cervix and you are now bringing your baby earthbound!
- Adrenaline is at its most fierce in this phase of labour and referred to as the 'fight or flight' hormone. The rush of adrenaline can activate the 'foetal ejection reflex' giving you a sudden rush of energy to bring your baby out.

- Unless your baby is in distress or you have an epidural, there shouldn't be any need to push until you feel the urge. You shouldn't need anyone to disturb you or examine you or tell you when you are ready to push.
- As you bear down, you may feel that the baby is coming down and then going back up. This can feel frustrating but it's very normal and is helping your body take time to stretch and expand slowly around your baby's head.
- TIP - Feeling inside your vagina for your baby's head can reassure you that what you are doing is working.
- Crowning - this can be the most intense part of labour. Some women liken it to a 'ring of fire' sensation but how you feel during this phase is really unpredictable and remember it will pass soon.
- For most women, their baby's head will emerge slowly. This allows the perineum to stretch gently around your baby. Once your baby's head has emerged, the shoulders will rotate so that one and then the other is born. The rest of baby's body will usually shoot out pretty quickly and your midwife will help to have your hands ready to catch your baby yourself or will catch it for you.



- You may have urges to be upright.
- Your heartbeat may be rapidly beating. In situations where more pressure and effort is needed to bear down, try blowing on your fist. This will also help ground you in your breath.
- You may experience a dry mouth. Take little sips of water.
- You may have shallow breathing. Do not hold your breath. Light shallow breathing is useful at the end of your labour to slow down when the baby's head crowns.
- You may have an urge to grab something or someone. That's okay.
- You may use a lot of obscenities. Go for it!
- You may think you can't do this. You are doing this.
- You are incredible and you and your baby are working together.

Photography by sadie wild photography

### OXYTOCIN & PROLACTIN HORMONES ARE WORKING THEIR MAGIC

Oxytocin is still playing its part at the end of your labour. By keeping in your protected bubble of love and euphoria as you birth your baby, will help with your bonding and keep you calm and relaxed for birthing your placenta too. Feeling unobserved, safe and warm will be key right now for the final phase of your birthing experience.

Prolactin hormone is the tender mothering hormone. In labour, prolactin levels decrease at first and rise in late labour, peaking at birth in preparation for mothering connection and milk production for breastfeeding your baby.