



Obstetrical
Gynecological

Associates, Inc. *We Understand Women.*

ASSISTED VAGINAL DELIVERY



OGA EDUCATIONAL SERIES



WELCOME

Welcome to Obstetrical and Gynecological Associates (OGA). Thank you for choosing us for your care. We are women, mothers, sisters and daughters, just like you, so we understand your concerns and relate to your needs. Our mission is to always expect the best outcome while providing caring, competent and compassionate care.

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ASSISTED VAGINAL DELIVERY

What is assisted vaginal delivery?

Assisted vaginal delivery is vaginal delivery of a baby performed with the help of forceps or a vacuum device. The type of delivery that is done depends on many factors, including your obstetrician's experience and your individual situation.



Forceps



Vacuum



How is a forceps-assisted delivery performed?

Forceps look like two large spoons. They are inserted into the vagina and placed around the baby's head. The forceps are used to apply gentle traction to help guide the baby's head out of the birth canal while you keep pushing.

How is vacuum-assisted delivery performed?

A vacuum device is a suction cup with a handle attached. The suction cup is placed in the vagina and applied to the top of the baby's head. Gentle, well-controlled traction is used to help guide the baby out of the birth canal while you keep pushing.

Why might assisted vaginal delivery be done?

Some of the reasons why an assisted vaginal delivery may be done include the following:

- There are concerns about the baby's heart rate pattern during labor.
- You have pushed for a long time but the baby's head has stopped moving down the birth canal.
- You are very tired from a long labor.
- A medical condition (such as heart disease) limits your ability to push safely and effectively.

What factors will be considered before choosing assisted vaginal delivery?

Before choosing this option, your obstetrician assesses a number of factors to ensure that the highest levels of safety are met. These factors include your baby's estimated weight, where your baby is in the birth canal and whether the size of your pelvis appears adequate for a vaginal delivery. Your cervix should be fully dilated, and the baby's head should be engaged (this means that the baby's head has dropped down into your pelvis).

What are the benefits of assisted vaginal delivery?

One of the main advantages of assisted vaginal delivery is that it avoids a cesarean delivery. Cesarean delivery is major surgery and has risks, such as heavy bleeding and infection. If you are planning to have more children, avoiding a cesarean delivery may help prevent some of the possible future complications of having multiple cesarean deliveries. Recovery from a vaginal delivery generally is shorter than recovery from a cesarean delivery. Often assisted vaginal delivery can be done more quickly than a cesarean delivery.

What are the risks for me if I have assisted vaginal delivery?

Both forceps-assisted delivery and vacuum-assisted delivery are associated with a small increased risk of injury to the tissues of the vagina, perineum and anus. A very small number of women may have urinary or fecal incontinence as a result of these injuries. Incontinence may go away on its own or treatment may be needed.



What are the risks for my baby if I have assisted vaginal delivery?

Although the overall rate of injury to the baby as a result of assisted vaginal delivery is low, there still is a risk of certain complications for the baby. These include injuries to the baby's scalp or eyes, bleeding inside the skull and problems with the nerves located in the arm and face. There is no evidence that assisted vaginal delivery has any effect on a child's development.

What are the chances of having a repeat assisted vaginal delivery in a future pregnancy?

If you have had one assisted vaginal delivery you have an increased risk of having one in a subsequent pregnancy. However, chances are good that you will have a spontaneous vaginal delivery. Some of the factors that increase the risk of another assisted delivery include a long (more than three years) interval between pregnancies or a fetus that is estimated to be larger than average.

What can I expect after having an assisted vaginal delivery?

After an assisted vaginal delivery, you may have perineal pain and bruising. It may be hard to walk or sit for a time. If you have had a perineal tear it may require repair with stitches. Minor tears may heal on their own without stitches. You likely will have a few weeks of swelling and pain as the perineum heals.

What can I do to help relieve pain and swelling after an assisted vaginal delivery?

To help ease pain and swelling after delivery, try the following tips:

- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever. Ibuprofen is preferred if you are breastfeeding. Acetaminophen is also a good choice.
- Apply an ice pack, cold pack, or cold gel pads to the area.
- Sit in cool water that is just deep enough to cover your buttocks and hips (called a sitz bath).
- Try putting a witch hazel pad on a sanitary napkin. Witch hazel has a cooling effect and is available over the counter.
- Use a "peri-bottle" while using the bathroom and afterward. This is a squeeze bottle that sends a spray of warm water over your perineum. It can help you urinate with less pain and is a great alternative to using toilet paper.
- Ask your obstetrician about using a numbing spray or cream to ease pain.
- If sitting is uncomfortable sit on a pillow.