



Water Birth: What you should Know

Immersion in a tub of warm water is a practice often used by obstetricians to comfort women during labor and reduce the need for medication to control pain. Many hospitals and birthing centers permit women to deliver their babies underwater.

A number of harmful events for newborns associated with water birth have been reported in the medical literature, including:

- Severe infection, including pneumonia and bloodstream infection
- Near drowning
- Ruptured umbilical cord
- Seizures
- Brain damage caused by low oxygen supply
- A low serum sodium level

In 2005, the American Academy of Pediatrics, after a careful review of water birth, published the following statement: “ The safety and efficacy of underwater birth for the newborn has not been established. There is no convincing evidence of benefit to the neonate but some concern for serious harm. Therefore, underwater birth should be considered an experimental procedure that should not be performed except within the context of an appropriately designed randomized clinical trial after informed parental consent.”

Before you consider water birth for your baby, please discuss these issues with your us.

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