



One of the ways that parents and doctors can prevent oxygen deprivation in a baby is proper prenatal care. Ultimately, parents and doctors work together to ensure a successful pregnancy, but it is key that doctors follow standards of care and keep parents informed of what they should be doing throughout pregnancy.

Each pregnancy is different, and medical staff must be able to adjust their approach to each situation appropriately. There are certain tasks that doctors can do to decrease the risk of a child having HIE.

### The Role of Medical Professionals in Your Baby's Care

#### Proper Prenatal Care



- Proper prenatal testing to identify problems early
- Insisting on keeping prenatal care on schedule
- Informing and educating families about healthy pregnancy, birth and childcare practices
- Advising mothers about proper prenatal diet and supplements (such as folic acid)
- Advising mothers about health exercise habits
- Advising others not to drink or smoke during pregnancy
- Helping mothers manage their health
- Treating a mother's underlying health conditions (like infections or sexually transmitted diseases)



- Ordering tests to identify genetic anomalies
- Addressing emergency situations like bleeding during pregnancy
- TORCH testing
- Keeping up-to-date on standards of care
- Avoiding medical malpractice and birth injuries

### Proper care during birth and delivery

- Properly monitoring the baby for signs of fetal distress
- Properly recording health indicators like APGAR scores
- Properly undertaking birthing techniques
- Adequately managing emergency situations
- Following standards of care in delivering the baby
- Recognizing and addressing delayed or stalled labor

### Proper postnatal care

- Ensuring the child is up-to-date on immunizations to avoid infectious disease
- Checking the newborn for jaundice
- Scheduling and keeping well-baby check-up visits to ensure the baby is developing properly

### The Role of Parents in Neonatal and Pediatric Care

Parents can seek out information from their physician about healthy pregnancy habits and monitoring, in order to take an active role in decreasing a pregnancy's risk. They should seek the advice of medical professionals in regards to diet, exercise, supplements and other personalized advice given to them about their medical history and risk factors. This is especially true of mothers with risk factors that make their pregnancy high-risk, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, preeclampsia, sexually transmitted diseases, or obesity. High-risk patients sometimes need extra monitoring and support, and it is critical to follow the advice of medical professionals to minimize pregnancy risk.



Parents can also check out their doctor's credentials and medical history to make sure their doctor and the hospital they plan to deliver at don't have a record of medical malpractice or mistakes during delivery. Parents may also explore their policies regarding scheduling doctors and procedures. Individual doctors can have different availabilities after-hours and are sometimes assigned on a 'rotating' schedule. In practice, this means that the doctor assisting in delivery might potentially not be the same one who did prenatal care.

*Other questions parents can ask when choosing doctors and hospitals include:*

- Does the hospital have a full-time OB/GYN on staff?
- Is the OB/GYN A, B, or C-listed?
- If you need emergency care, will you have access to a well-trained emergency staff?
- What's the hospital's medical malpractice record? Do they have a record of birth injuries?
- What would the doctor do in an emergency situation?
  - Would they monitor fetal heartbeat?
  - How do they make the decision to do a C-section?
  - What do they do if a delivery takes a long time?
  - What do they do if the baby gets stuck? Would they use forceps?
  - Is the baby shows signs of distress, what would they do?
  - Do they induce labor? What medications do they use?
  - If a baby's or mother's health is in danger, what would they do?

*After a baby is born, parents should:*

- Monitor the baby for signs of jaundice (yellow skin) or other illness
- Keep vaccines up-to-date
- Bring developmental or health concerns up with a medical professional
- Avoid injury to the baby by using proper car seats, high chairs, strollers and bikes

If a baby needs medical care, parents can take an active role by keeping informed about any



procedures their baby must undergo. *Questions can include:*

- What is the purpose of the procedure?
- What are the risks?
- Are there alternatives? What are they?
- How often has the doctor done the procedure?
- What are the doctor's qualifications and experience?

Being informed is one of the best things that a parent can do to ensure their child will be healthy. They must also, however, be aware that unforeseen medical emergencies at birth sometimes do occur, and that medical professionals are required to properly provide medical interventions if their baby is in distress.