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5 facts about

Nuchal Cord

(umbilical cord around fetus or baby's neck)

1

1 / 3 OF BABIES ARE BORN WITH A NUCHAL CORD

Nuchal cord is very common. Most are very loose and do not cause problems. The cord can often be easily slipped over the baby's head.¹

2

WHARTON'S JELLY PROTECTS AGAINST COMPRESSION

While connected to the placenta, babies receive all of their oxygen through the umbilical cord. Since they don't yet breathe through their trachea & lungs, having a cord around their neck does not cut off their air.

Wharton's Jelly inside the cord protects against compression - even in cases of extremely tight cords/cords wrapped multiple times/true knots. A cord would have to be extremely tight to cut off blood flow through the blood vessels in the neck.²

3

NUCHAL CORD, NO NUCHAL CORD - SAME OUTCOMES

Research shows that babies WITH a nuchal cord have no worse outcomes than those WITHOUT one.³

4

INTERVENTIONS INCREASE HEART DECELERATIONS - NUCHAL CORD BLAMED

Babies born with a nuchal cord can show more heart decelerations than babies without them. The nuchal cord may not be the cause, but it is frequently blamed.

Interventions that increase heart decelerations include induction of labor, epidural, laying supine (on back), and having waters broken. Induction of labor is also been identified as an independent risk factor for nuchal cord.^{4, 5}

5

IMMEDIATE CORD CUTTING NOT NECESSARY, EVEN DANGEROUS

While still attached to the placenta, the baby is receiving oxygen through the cord. Simply unlooping the cord and leaving it attached allows the baby to receive all of its blood, oxygen and nutrients from the placenta, helping it to transition into the world. Cutting the cord before birth is associated with hypovolemia, anemia, shock, hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy & cerebral palsy.⁶

References

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