

# Balloon disimpaction of the baby's head at emergency caesarean during the second stage of labour

Information for the public

Published: 23 April 2025

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

This procedure can only be done as part of a research study in centres that do not already use the procedure. This is because there is not enough evidence to be sure how well it works. Because there are no major safety concerns, centres already using this procedure may continue to do so but are encouraged to collect data or do further research.

Your healthcare professional should talk to you about the research.

In the final weeks of pregnancy, the baby's head moves down into the pelvis. Sometimes a problem during labour means that an emergency caesarean is needed to deliver the baby through a cut in the tummy and womb. If the baby's head is stuck (impacted) low down in the pelvis, it can be difficult to deliver the baby. This can lead to delay or injury to the woman, trans man or non-binary person giving birth, or to the baby. In this procedure, a silicone balloon is inserted into the vagina and inflated to lift the baby's head (disimpaction) before starting the caesarean. The aim is to make delivery easier.

## Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

## Some questions to think about

- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

## Information and support

The [NHS webpage on labour and birth](#) may be a good place to find out more.

- [NICE's information on HealthTech guidance](#) explains what HealthTech is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on HealthTech recommendations](#) explains what more research is needed means.

The [Birth Trauma Association](#), at [enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk), can give you advice and support.

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

ISBN: 978-1-4731-9018-4