



## Glossary of Terms

**Augment Labor:** Refers to using techniques or medications to make labor stronger. May be natural techniques such as breaking the membranes, using nipple stimulation, or herbs, or artificial techniques such as pitocin or prostaglandins.

**Breech:** Malpresentation of the baby. Normally the baby comes head first. A breech baby may enter into the pelvis either feet first (footling breech) or butt first (frank or complete breech).

**CPD:** Cephalo-pelvic Disproportion. The baby's head (cephalo) is not the appropriate size for the woman's pelvis (pelvic).

**Cesarean Section/C-Section:** The Surgical removal of the baby from the uterus through the abdominal wall by physicians.

**Dilatation:** Refers to the opening of the cervix from the closed position early in pregnancy to open 10 centimeters wide to allow passage of the baby's head during birth.

**Dystocia:** Lack of progress in labor, or failure to progress in labor are other terms for dystocia. CPD is a category of dystocia and dystocia may have fetal causes (malpresentation of the head) or uterine causes (weak/ineffective contractions), or unknown causes, thought to be attributed to unnecessary interventions.

**Effacement:** Refers to the thinning and shortening of the cervix. A cervix early in pregnancy is usually 0% effaced (4 centimeters long) and immediately before giving birth is 100% effaced (no more length).

**EDC/EDD:** Estimated date of confinement or estimated due date, based on last menstrual period (LMP) or early ultrasound dating.

**Episiotomy:** Cutting with scissors the tissue between the vaginal opening and the rectal opening to expedite the birth of the baby. Usually only done in rare emergencies at a birth center

**Inducing Labor:** Labor has not started on its own and medications or procedures are used to get labor started. Examples are pitocin, prostaglandins or artificially breaking the water.

**LMP:** Last Menstrual Period, used determine estimated due date.

**OP:** OP stands for occiput (head) posterior. This means the baby's spine is back on the mother's spine and the head is face up. Often prolongs labor and causes back pain.

**Pitocin:** Synthetic medicine used to cause uterine contractions. Can be used before birth (induce or augment), or after birth when bleeding is heavy to prevent hemorrhage.

**Prostaglandins:** Synthetic medicine used in the hospital to ripen the cervix prior to induce labor. Natural hormones produced by the body that ripen the cervix.

**Station:** Refers to the relationship of the baby's head to the mom's bony pelvis. Your care provider can only determine this with a pelvic exam. Your baby can be floating (-4) or crowning (+4, ready to give birth).