

BIRTH TRAUMA

By Ati Petrov DHHP 2006 ©

Birth is a natural process that's been around since the beginning of mankind. Our body was designed to carry it out in the best possible way. So what can cause trauma at birth?

In the case of a natural birth with no use of medication or other interference, one would imagine that all is well and no possible problems can arise out of it. Yet, even natural processes can be crude and traumatic. After a period of weightless bliss in the warm proximity of mom's heart we start on a journey through a cramped birth canal, pushed and squeezed, enormous pressure on our skull and spine, our body twisting and stretching and finally emerging into a cold world of glaring lights and the entire gravitational force slamming on us amid loud noises, strange hands... whisked away to be pinched, washed and in the best of cases just getting a Vit K needle in the heel (yikes! – a nerve-rich area!) and some burning drops into our eyes that leave us blinder than we already were after the comfortable dimness of the womb.

In our age of scientific advancement in medical technology the above idyllic picture can be made drastically worse. Witness the many medical interventions and high-tech births and the rising incidence of traumatic birth syndrome. In [a JAMA study](#) we see that the United States ranked last in neonatal mortality, infant mortality and for the health of newborns.) And there is a reason for that.

Even though there can be trauma-induced skull and spinal damage and spinal misalignment as a result of the birth process, the fact that nowadays women give birth lying on their back, working against gravity, usually on medications to increase the intensity of labor, while numbing the delivery muscles, and often accompanied by surgical interventions, makes birth exponentially more traumatic.

Possible problems at birth

Natural birth can create (and it usually does) structural mis-alignments and spinal compression. In cases where the cord was wound around the neck of the baby and it impeded breathing we can have issues of suffocation and lack of oxygen to the brain, even if for short periods of time. In some cases babies have ingested muconium and need to be aspirated right after birth. Drops in the eyes – usually silver nitrate or antibiotics – cause burning and blurred vision.

Assisted birth has a whole series of other problems of iatrogenic (drug-induced) nature. The mother can be given hormones to induce birth when the baby is overdue, or an epidural to help reduce pain during birth. Sometimes both. Induction artificially increases contractions making the whole process much more violent than was necessary. Epidurals, on the other hand, slow down the birth process so even if less painful, it drags on longer. The baby is affected by all drugs given to the mother while it is still in the womb, so oftentimes its first emergence into our world happens in a state of dazed confusion. And

in many cases where Demerol or other opiates were used during the birth process, the child is further affected by those drugs.

Did you know that Morphine is on the (long!) list of offered medication to birthing women in Canada? Now, what kind of situation would warrant the use of such a powerful drug for a natural process like giving birth?!

Cesarean sections are violent events as anyone who has witnessed one can attest. They involve full sedation of the mother (baby is affected by the anesthetics) and then full abdominal surgery ensues, with the baby being tugged and plucked out of the womb with little grace.

Of course, there are cases where an emergency or an extraordinary situation warrants medical intervention and we are all very thankful to have that available in those circumstances, but they are few compared to the amount of interventions done for no better reason than because they CAN be done (the doctor leaving on vacation, the mom wanting to have baby by a particular date, mothers being less and less in touch with their body and with nature and preferring a technical birth to one that is intimate and meaningful – not to say safe and less harmful).

What heilkunst can offer to remedy the bad effects of a traumatic birth

All patients undergoing the full Heilkunst program of treatment are given remedies to remove any latent trauma left over from a difficult birth. Even those who have had a natural birth with no complications receive remedies to deal with the usual sublaxations and spinal deviations that can result from natural birth.

We also use remedies to detoxify the system from past use of drugs (for mom or baby) and any other procedures that may have created an adverse response in the healthy body. It is useful at this time to have a craneo-sacral session as it is the best time to re-adjust any structural problems with permanent results.

In addition to remedies for the physical part of the birth process, we also use remedies to address any emotional stress that can result from the sudden parting of baby with its known environment and its exposure to what must certainly seem a strange and hostile place at first. Baby is whisked away from mom and depending on the situation and what is then done, it may go through fear and separation anxiety to severe abandonment fears or a sense of deep violation of the self in those cases where injections, vaccines or circumcision were performed soon after birth.

Remedies are also oftentimes used to treat the lack of nurturing experienced by babies who were unable to bond to their mother either due to separation or to an inability of mom to breastfeed or, as is often the case, as a result a mother suffering from post-partum depression or emotional imbalances.

We also offer help to new mothers who have gone through a difficult birth and may need support to heal faster, to detox, and to gain back their emotional stability in the case of emotional stress.