Introduction to the WHO Labour Care Guide:

A tool for implementing recommendations on intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience
Outline

1. WHO recommendations on intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience

2. WHO Labour Care Guide: the next generation partograph
2018 WHO intrapartum care recommendations

“The aim of this guideline is to improve the quality of essential intrapartum care with the ultimate goal of improving maternal, fetal and newborn outcomes.”

✓ 26 new recommendations
✓ 30 existing recommendations
✓ From labour onset through to the immediate postnatal period
✓ For healthy women and babies
✓ Any health care setting

Link to WHO Recommendations on intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience

Link to WHO intrapartum care recommendations slideshow
Guiding principles for the WHO intrapartum care model

✓ Labour and childbirth should be individualized and woman-centred

✓ No intervention should be implemented without a clear medical indication

✓ Only interventions that serve an immediate purpose and proven to be beneficial should be promoted

✓ A clear objective that a positive childbirth experience for the woman, the newborn and her family should be at the forefront of labour and childbirth care at all times

Link to WHO Intrapartum Care Model
2. WHO Labour Care Guide: the next generation partograph
Labour Care Guide: Why?

Labour Care Guide was developed to improve every woman’s experience of childbirth, and to help ensure the health and well-being of women and their babies by facilitating the effective implementation of the WHO intrapartum care recommendations.

This tool establishes essential good-quality and evidence-based clinical care in all settings, and it expands the focus of labour monitoring to non-clinical practices that promote a positive childbirth experience for every woman and baby.
WHO Labour Care Guide: Aims

✓ Guide the monitoring and documentation of the well-being of women and babies and the progress of labour

✓ Guide health personnel to offer supportive care throughout labour to ensure a positive childbirth experience for women

✓ Assist health personnel to promptly identify and address emerging labour complications, by providing reference thresholds for labour observations that are intended to trigger reflection and specific action(s) if an abnormal observation is identified

✓ Prevent unnecessary use of interventions in labour

✓ Support audit and quality improvement of labour management
For whom should the Labour Care Guide be used?

The Labour Care Guide has been designed for the care of women and their babies during labour and birth.

It includes assessments and observations that are essential for the care of *all pregnant women*, regardless of their risk status.

However, the Labour Care Guide was primarily designed to be used for the care of apparently healthy pregnant women and their babies (i.e. women with low-risk pregnancies).

High-risk women many require additional and specialized monitoring and care.
When should the Labour Care Guide be initiated?

Documentation on the Labour Care Guide should be initiated when the woman enters the active phase of the first stage of labour (5 cm or more cervical dilatation), regardless of her parity and membranes status.

Although the Labour Care Guide should not be initiated during the latent phase of labour, it is expected that women and their babies are monitored and that they receive labour care and support during the latent phase.

Once initiated, the Labour Care Guide will support continuous monitoring throughout the first and second stage of active labour.
Where should the Labour Care Guide be used?

The Labour Care Guide is designed for use at all levels of care in health facilities, although the plan of action will vary depending on level of care.

The use of the Labour Care Guide can facilitate early identification of potential complications; hence, it should contribute to timely referrals when required.
Structure of the WHO Labour Care Guide

The Labour Care Guide has 7 sections, which were adapted from the previous partograph design:

**Section 1:** Identifying information and labour characteristics at admission

**Section 2:** Supportive care

**Section 3:** Care of the baby

**Section 4:** Care of the woman

**Section 5:** Labour progress

**Section 6:** Medication

**Section 7:** Shared decision-making

These sections contain a list of labour observations.
The health-care provider should record observations for all sections soon after the woman is admitted to the labour ward.

The remainder of the Labour Care Guide is then completed following subsequent assessments throughout labour.

For all observations, there is a horizontal time axis for documentation of the corresponding time of observation and a vertical reference values axis for determination of any deviation from normal observations.

The Labour Care Guide also provides a second-stage section to continue the observations made during the first stage of labour.
Section 1 is for documenting the woman’s name and labour admission characteristics that are important for labour management: parity, mode of labour onset, date of active labour diagnosis, date and time of rupture of membranes, and risk factors.

This section should be completed with the information obtained when active labour diagnosis is confirmed.
Section 2: Supportive care

Respectful maternity care (RMC) is a fundamental human right of pregnant women and is a core component of the WHO intrapartum care recommendations.

The supportive care section includes labour companionship, access to pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain relief, ensuring women are offered oral fluid, and techniques to improve women’s comfort (such as encouraging women to be mobile during labour).

Section 2 of the Labour care Guide, Supportive Care, aims to encourage the consistent practice of RMC, through the continuous provision and monitoring of supportive care.
Section 3: Care of the baby

Section 3, Care of the baby, was designed to facilitate decision-making while monitoring the well-being of the baby.

The well-being of the baby is monitored by regular observation of baseline fetal heart rate (FHR) and decelerations in FHR, and of amniotic fluid, fetal position, moulding of the fetal head, and development of caput succedaneum.
Section 4: Care of the woman

Section 4, Care of the Woman, is to facilitate decision-making for consistent, intermittent monitoring of the woman’s well-being.

The woman’s health and well-being are monitored on the Labour Care Guide by regular observation of the pulse, blood pressure, temperature and urine.

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**ACTIVE FIRST STAGE**

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<tr>
<th>WOMAN</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Pulse</th>
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<th>Diastolic BP</th>
<th>Temperature °C</th>
<th>Urine</th>
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<td>&lt;60, ≤120</td>
<td>&lt;80, ≤140</td>
<td>≥90</td>
<td>&lt;35.0, ≥ 37.5</td>
<td>P++, A++</td>
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**SECOND STAGE**
Section 5: Labour progress

Section 5, Labour Progress, aims to encourage the systematic practice of intermittent monitoring of labour progression parameters.

Labour progress is recorded on the Labour Care Guide by regular observation of the frequency and duration of contractions, cervical dilatation and descent of the baby’s head.
Section 6: Medication

Section 6, Medication, aims to facilitate consistent recording of all types of medication used during labour, by describing whether the woman is receiving oxytocin, and its dose, and whether other medications or IV fluids are being administered.
Section 7: Shared decision-making

Section 7, Shared decision-making, aims to facilitate continuous communication with the woman and her companion, and the consistent recording of all assessments and plans agreed.

WHO recommends effective communication between maternity health providers and women in labour, including the use of simple and culturally appropriate language.

Clear explanations of procedures and their purpose should always be provided to each woman.

The findings of physical examinations should be explained to the woman and her companion, and the subsequent course of action made clear to enable shared decision-making.
How to use the Labour Care Guide: Labour monitoring to action

The Labour Care Guide creates a positive feedback and decision-making loop, as health personnel are encouraged to regularly:

• **Assess** → assess the well-being of woman and her baby, and progress of labour
• **Record** → document labour observations
• **Check reference threshold** → compare labour observations with reference values in the “Alert” column
• **Plan** → decide whether and what interventions are required, in consultation with the woman, and document accordingly

By recording and reviewing their observations against these references, health personnel are encouraged to think critically, avoid unnecessary interventions and act on warning signs.

The Labour Care Guide includes a section to **document shared decisions** to address any deviation. The decision to **intervene** in the course of labour is primarily based on **observation of a deviation** from expected observations.

The WHO Labour Care Guide User’s Manual has been developed to help health personnel who care for women during labour and childbirth to **successfully use the Labour care Guide**.

The primary target audience for this manual is **skilled health personnel** directly providing labour and childbirth care in all settings.

The manual will also be of interest to staff involved in training health care personnel, health-care facility managers, implementers and managers of maternal and child health programmes, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and professional societies involved in the planning and management of maternal and child health services.

This manual **provide guidance on how to complete** each section of the Labour Care Guide.
Additional resources

The following additional resources are available for facilitating the implementation of the WHO Labour Care Guide.

**WHO Labour Care Guide**
**User’s Manual**

**WHO recommendations on intrapartum care for a positive childbirth experience**

**WHO intrapartum care recommendations: Slidedoc**

**Coming soon:**

**WHO Labour Care Guide Training slides**
Thank you

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