

# Lotus Birth: Rare Practice, Possible Risks

Agnes Mahima David<sup>1</sup>, Sachin Chhari<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rama College of Nursing, Rama University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

<sup>2</sup>Regency Institute of Nursing, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

## ABSTRACT

Lotus birth, also known as umbilical nonseverance, is a birthing practice where the umbilical cord and placenta are left attached to the newborn until they naturally separate, rather than being cut and clamped shortly after birth. This approach is rooted in the belief that allowing the cord to detach on its own supports a gentler transition for the baby from the womb to the outside world. Proponents claim that lotus birth offers physiological advantages, such as continued transfer of blood and nutrients, and may foster emotional benefits by promoting early bonding between mother and child. The practice is inspired by both ancient spiritual traditions and observed behaviors in the animal kingdom. However, lotus birth also presents challenges, including practical difficulties in newborn care and concerns about infection risk. As interest in alternative birthing practices grows, further research is needed to fully understand the benefits and risks associated with lotus birth.

**KEYWORDS:** *lotus birth, umbilical nonseverance.*

## INTRODUCTION

Lotus birth (umbilical non-severance) is a little-known practice that is gaining popularity. Typically, the umbilical cord is cut and clamped soon after birth, and the placenta is disposed of. However, in a lotus birth, the cord is never cut, and the placenta—often referred to as the baby’s first companion—remains attached to the baby until it naturally separates and falls off.

Many ancient scriptures suggest that holy figures such as Buddha, Vishnu, and Christ experienced umbilical nonseverance. The lotus flower serves as an apt symbol for this practice:

the stalk of the umbilical cord, which rises from the placenta, shares unique similarities with the lotus stem and leaf pad. A fresh lotus stem is strong yet flexible, much like the umbilical cord, and the lotus leaf’s lacy vein patterns resemble those found on the fetal side of the placenta. Interestingly, some animals, such as chimpanzees, allow their infants’ placentas to detach naturally, without intervention.<sup>1</sup>

Lotus birth involves keeping the umbilical cord intact and connected to the baby, rather than clamping and cutting it, until it naturally detaches—usually 3 to 10

days after birth. For some families with spiritual or cultural beliefs, it is important that the umbilical cord and placenta remain intact. However, current research has not found any medical benefit to keeping the baby attached to the placenta after the cord has stopped pulsating. In contrast, there are significant and well-documented risks. Lotus birth has been linked to an increased risk of infection, sepsis, jaundice, and hepatitis in newborns. There have also been associations with postpartum hemorrhage and, in rare cases, neonatal death from infection. These infections can be difficult to diagnose, may spread rapidly, and can be fatal within a short time<sup>2</sup>

### Lotus birth

Lotus birth is a practice of leaving umbilical cord uncut after childbirth and baby is left attached to the placenta until the cord naturally separates at the umbilicus which usually occur within 3-10 day of birth<sup>4</sup>

### Lotus Birth Process

1. Immediately after birth, the placenta and baby remain attached, with the umbilical cord left unclamped and uncut.

**How to cite this paper:** Agnes Mahima David | Sachin Chhari "Lotus Birth: Rare Practice, Possible Risks" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-10 | Issue-3, June 2026, pp.639-641, [www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd125272.pdf](http://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd125272.pdf)



IJTSRD125272

URL:

Copyright © 2026 by author (s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



2. Any blood clots on the placenta are gently rinsed away with water.
3. The placenta is patted dry and allowed to drain excess fluid for several hours in a bowl or sieve.
4. After draining, the placenta is placed in a breathable container-such as a basket or cloth bag-and preserved with absorbent materials like sea salt, dried herbs, and sometimes essential oils.
5. The baby always stays close to the placenta container, with the umbilical cord monitored for signs of natural separation.
6. Parents should always use clean hands when handling the placenta and take care to maintain hygiene throughout the process.
7. Typically, the umbilical cord dries and detaches on its own within three to ten days, marking the end of the lotus birth process.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Advantages:**

- The placenta contains quite a bit of extra blood, rich in nutrients and oxygen, that boosts their immune system which continues to pass to the child till the placenta dries out.
- The mother gets to hold the baby during the birth of the placenta, which is an enjoyable bonding experience;
- Lotus birth babies don't usually lose weight, and they are less likely to have breastfeeding jaundice.
- There is a lower risk of navel infection, open wound infection as seen in cut cord, and the navel tends to heal two or three weeks faster.
- It also supports the child's young liver, lungs because the placenta continues to pump out toxins while still providing oxygenated blood to the child.
- Lotus birthed babies seem more relaxed, peaceful, calm, healthy and more content than their counterparts whose cords are immediately cut.
- The cord usually separates by the third day, leaving behind no stump. You can bathe the child while the cord is still drying rather than waiting for a stump to detach.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- The baby is unable to be taken away for checking and tests immediately after birth, as it is still attached to the placenta, which is still inside the mother.
- The placenta can become a hindrance when carrying the baby around, etc

#### **Lotus Birth: A Closer Look at the Risks and Realities**

Lotus birth, the practice of leaving the umbilical cord and placenta attached to a newborn until they separate naturally, is often described as gentle and holistic. However, innovative perspectives are essential when considering the safety of this practice:

- **Biological Transition:** Once outside the womb, the placenta ceases to function and becomes dead tissue, creating an environment susceptible to bacterial growth and infection. This risk extends directly to the infant.
  - **Uncharted Territory:** People have experimented with different ways to preserve the placenta-wrapping it in cloth, storing it in bags, or using herbs and spices for preservation. Yet, none of these methods have undergone scientific validation, making their effectiveness and safety uncertain.
  - **Cord Avulsion Danger:** The umbilical cord, once lifeless, becomes fragile. Accidental pulling or tearing (cord avulsion) could cause injury to the baby, a risk not often discussed in popular narratives.
  - **Missing Guidance:** There is a notable absence of official medical protocols or evidence-based recommendations for lotus birth care. Families are left to navigate this process through anecdotal advice and online forums.<sup>6</sup>
- #### **Care of Placenta After Birth (Lotus Birth)**
- Lotus births, where the umbilical cord and placenta remain attached to the newborn until they naturally separate, carry certain health risks. To help protect your baby, follow these guidelines:
- **Keep the Placenta Close:** Place the placenta near your baby. Always lift or hold your baby with clean, thoroughly washed hands to minimize the risk of tugging the cord, which could cause it to detach prematurely.
  - **Gentle Handling:** Be careful not to pull or put tension on the cord. Dress your baby in loose, comfortable clothing that opens in the front to avoid disturbing the cord and placenta.
  - **Do Not Remove the Cord:** Never try to remove the umbilical cord yourself. It should fall off naturally within 3 to 10 days after birth, although it may take up to 15 days in some cases.
  - **Watch for Signs of Infection:** Monitor the umbilical area for any signs of infection. Seek immediate medical care if you notice any of the following:
    - A pus- or fluid-filled lump near the umbilical cord

- Red, warm, or swollen skin around the cord
- Cloudy, foul-smelling discharge or blood from the cord or navel
- Fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
- Baby appears irritable, lethargic, has trouble feeding, or shows decreased activity

Prompt attention to these signs can help ensure your baby's health and safety during the process of natural cord separation.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Duration of Detachment of Umbilical Cord**

The umbilical cord typically detaches naturally from the baby's navel within 5 to 15 days after birth. During this period, it is important to keep the area clean and dry and to avoid pulling or disturbing the cord to allow for safe and natural separation.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Conclusion:**

Embracing innovation in birth practices means not just adopting new rituals, but also insisting on scientific scrutiny, open discussion, and prioritizing infant safety. The practice of lotus birth is uncommon, and there is a notable lack of academic literature available on the topic. Research regarding its safety is limited, with no published epidemiological data to support its routine use. As such, the practice is not scientifically justified, and the World Health Organization does not endorse lotus birth. Nevertheless, it is important that healthcare practitioners are aware of lotus births and able to provide consistent information to parents. Continued collection and publication of case reports, along with gathering data on its incidence, are essential to better understand the practice. SA Health services strongly advise against this practice. There is no evidence that keeping the placenta attached has any health benefits for the mother or baby. In fact, there are well-founded concerns about an increased risk of infection. Before opting for a lotus birth, women should be fully informed about potential risks, including infection and associated health risks to the baby. Babies with non-

severed umbilical cords should be carefully monitored for any signs of infection

#### **References**

- [1] Lotus Birth Patient Information Brochure <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/>
- [2] Ahmed Yousef, Yousef. A Lotus birth: an uncommon birth practice with possible neonatal complications. VOLUME 19 ISSUE 4/JULY 2023 [https://www.infantjournal.co.uk/journal\\_article.html?id=7366](https://www.infantjournal.co.uk/journal_article.html?id=7366)
- [3] Kaur Sandeep, textbook of Midwifery / obstetrics and Gynecology nursing, CBS publisher, pageno:32
- [4] Understanding Lotus Birth: An In-depth Look at Its Significance and Process <https://www.nicebabyname.com/blog/pregnancy/your-body/understanding-lotus-birth-an-in-depth-look-at-its-significance-and-process>
- [5] <https://www.webmd.com/baby/is-lotus-birth-safe>
- [6] Lotus Birth - A Ritual or Scientific K. Vidhya and Kalaimathy. AAsian J. Nur. Edu. and Research 1(3): July-Sept. 2011; Page 92-93 [https://ajner.com/HTML\\_Papers/Asian Journal of Nursing Education and Research\\_\\_PID\\_\\_2011-1-3-8.html](https://ajner.com/HTML_Papers/Asian Journal of Nursing Education and Research__PID__2011-1-3-8.html)
- [7] Mrs Archana sonar lotus birth J. of Appl. Sci. And Research, 2023,11(1):1:4 [https://www.scientiaresearchlibrary.com/archive/JASR\\_2023\\_11\\_1\\_488\\_1\\_4.pdf](https://www.scientiaresearchlibrary.com/archive/JASR_2023_11_1_488_1_4.pdf)
- [8] Remzi Karasungur1, Orhan Polat2\*, Murat Seve3, Lotus Birth Method and Nursing Care Journal of Health and Biological Sciences GJOHBS 2025;1(1):31-35