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The great day has arrived, but while every mum wants giving birth to go as quickly as possible, the truth is that most first labours last an average of 12 to 16 hours.

A woman goes through early labour then three more recognisable stages of labour. The first stage is the longest one, with contractions building in intensity and frequency as the cervix opens sufficiently.

The second phase is the actual delivery of the baby and the third phase usually refers to the delivery of the placenta.

The second stage, which can take up to an hour, is the most exciting phase of having a baby as the big moment is almost here. Of course it can be painful – although you will be offered pain relief to help cope with the contractions - and the pushing can be exhausting. But the end is in sight. Soon you will be holding your newborn baby in your arms.

During this second phase of having a baby, your contractions will become even stronger and closer together and you will feel the urge to bear down and push with each one.

With every single push, your baby will move further down the birth canal and you are closer to giving birth.

Eventually the baby's head will 'crown', passing through the perineum and you may feel an intense burning sensation.

The midwife will most likely encourage you to –pant–™, a succession of quick, short breaths to allow the perineum to stretch and not tear.

Some women will of course tear, or possibly, before that happens, your midwife will decide to perform an episiotomy (a small cut which will be stitched after you have given birth).

Once your baby's head is out the next contraction is the most important one of all. When you start to push this final time your baby will turn to release one shoulder, quickly followed by the other.

This is a moment of intense relief as all pain and discomfort stops immediately. Many women describe the moment as feeling incredibly, intensely happy.

Once the baby is born, the cord will be clamped and cut – sometimes new dads are allowed to do this – and the baby will be handed to the proud mum.

This skin-to-skin contact is beautiful and very natural and although baby may look discoloured, wrinkly and not at all like the newborn babies in the movies, she will seem like the most beautiful baby in the world to the proud new mum and dad.

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<http://www.articleside.com/family-articles/what-to-expect-when-giving-birth-phase-two.htm> - [Article Side](#)

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Debra Aspinall is an experienced journalist and the editor and leading writer for the Emma's Diary website, one of the UK's foremost pregnancy and baby websites. She writes on how to get pregnant, having a baby, a [early signs of pregnancy](#) and etc. If you are searching for pregnancy information, please visit us at Emmasdiary.co.uk.

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