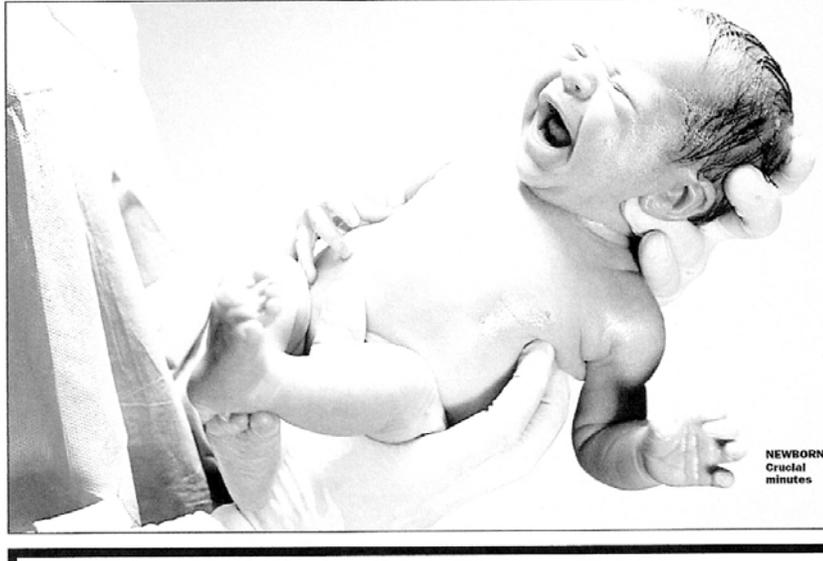


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NEWS

# Cord clamping danger to babies

Photo: STEPHEN MARKS/Getty



**NEWBORN:**  
Crucial minutes

## EXCLUSIVE

By **Lucy Johnston** HEALTH EDITOR

CLAMPING a newborn baby's umbilical cord too soon after birth can lead to oxygen deprivation and may explain the dramatic rise in autism, scientists have warned.

Groundbreaking research suggests the routine practice of cutting the cord quickly after delivery may reduce an infant's supplies of oxygen and nutrient rich blood in the crucial minutes before they start breathing.

Specialists now believe that in vulnerable infants this is leading to brain hemorrhaging, iron deficiencies and mental impairment, including autism, a mental condition characterised by extreme loneliness and desire for sameness. Experts say this now affects up to one in 100 children – a sevenfold rise over the past decade.

Last night, David Hutchon, consultant obstetrician at Darlington Memorial Hospital who has studied the effects of cord clamping said: "Babies are being put at risk by clamping the cord too quickly."

"The blood and oxygen supplies in the baby are rapidly decreasing during the minutes after birth. Infants need an increased blood volume to fill their lungs and the rest of their organs that are coming into use."

He added: "In susceptible infants, early cord clamping and the lack of blood to the baby increases the risk of brain haemorrhage and breathing problems. This could help explain the rise in autism. Why are we doing it?"

He added that he considered the modern practice of early cord clamping to be "critical" in particularly vulnerable and undernourished infants.

And he said: "Obstetricians are more likely to clamp early than midwives. It is perhaps significant that autism seems to be

**'A lack of blood supply can lead to autism'**

By Lucy Johnston HEALTH EDITOR, Daily Express Weekend – Dec, 16, 2007

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He added that he considered the modern practice of early cord clamping to be "criminal" in particularly vulnerable and undernourished infants. And he said, "Obstetricians are more likely to clamp early than midwives. It is perhaps significant that autism seems to be more prevalent in babies who were delivered by an obstetrician."

Umbilical cords are now clamped almost immediately ... before 30 seconds in many hospitals because over the last 20 years doctors have increasingly believed this could reduce the risk of mothers bleeding to death.

However: a growing number of experts, including Mr Hutchon, believe the risks to the baby outweigh the potential harm to the mother. They say at least three minutes should elapse before the cord is cut to allow the mother's blood from the placenta to continue to flow into the baby until its breathing is more established.

Their theory is borne out by recent research. In one major study, involving more than 1,900 newborns and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, delaying cord clamping for two minutes reduced the risk of anemia by half and low iron levels in the blood by a third.

Eileen Hutton, assistant dean of midwifery at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada, who carried out the research, said: "These benefits extend beyond the early neonatal period."

Another study carried out by Andrew Weeks, and published in the British Medical Journal had similar findings: Dr Weeks, senior lecturer in Obstetrics at the University of Liverpool and practicing obstetrician at Liverpool Women's Hospital, told the Sunday Express: "I delay the cutting of the cord. This is especially important for premature babies who have fragile blood vessels. The lack of blood supply could theoretically lead to autism.

"There is evidence to show it [immediate clamping] can damage a baby but none to show it can benefit."

Patrick O'Brien, spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said: "The latest research does suggest parents should be given a choice and it should be discussed routinely in antenatal classes."

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**Birth injuries caused by immediate clamping of the umbilical cord are explained and discussed fully at the following web sites:**

[www.autism-end-it-now.org](http://www.autism-end-it-now.org)

[www.birth-brain-injury.org](http://www.birth-brain-injury.org)

[www.cordclamp.com](http://www.cordclamp.com)

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**I gave a PowerPoint presentation on cord clamping injuries at Darlington Memorial Hospital on September 24, 2007.**

**GMM.**