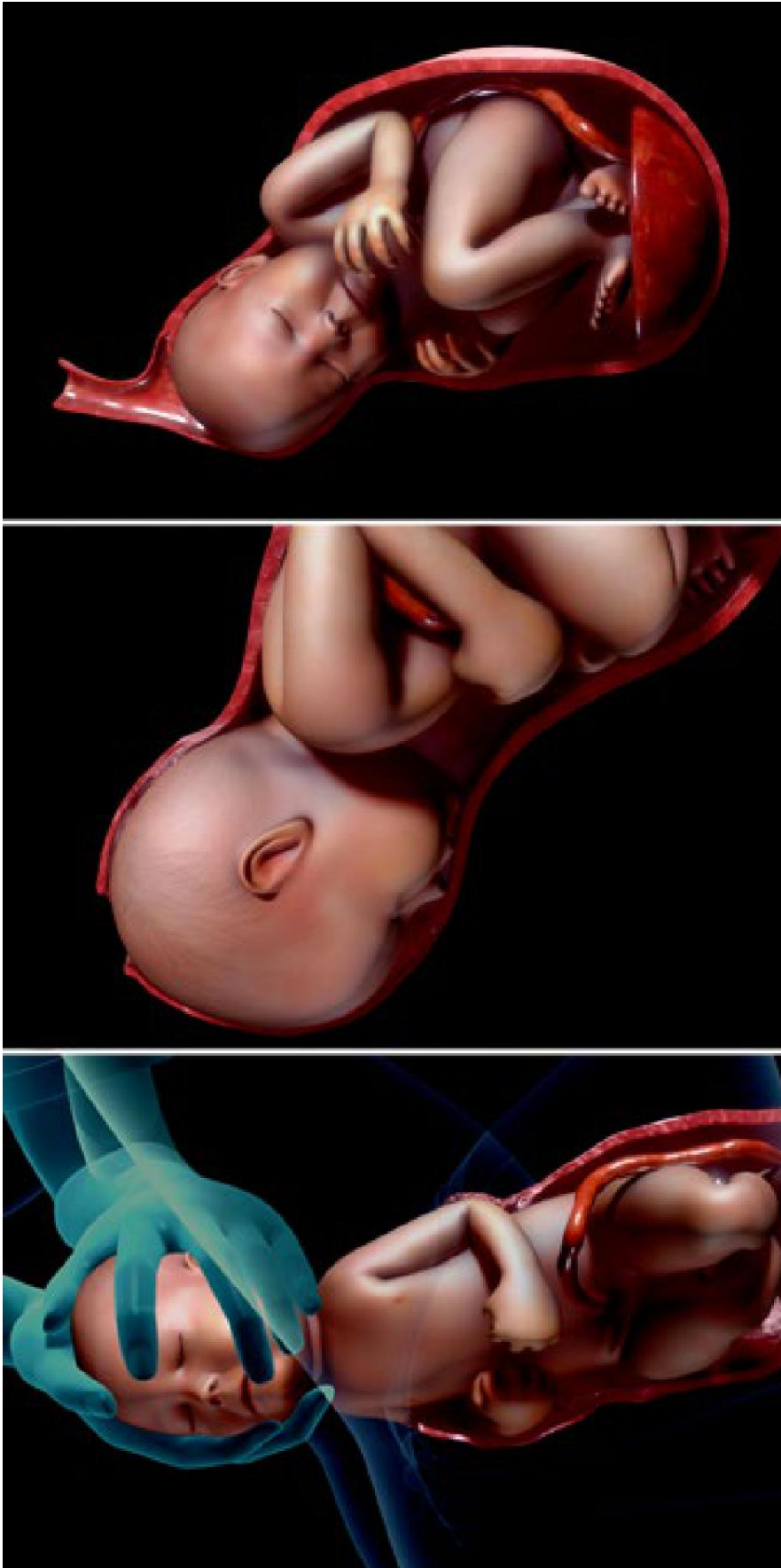




Vaginal Delivery



Overview

This is the most common way a pregnant woman gives birth. It's when the baby is pushed out through the vagina. Let's learn more about what your body goes through in delivery.

Contractions

First, you begin to have muscle spasms we call "contractions." You feel these spasms in your abdomen. Your cervix (the pathway to your womb) gradually gets bigger to let the baby come out. We call this "dilation."

Active labor

When your cervix opens enough and your contractions get strong, that's when you're in "labor." You may feel cramping and pain. If it hasn't already happened, the bag of fluid surrounding your baby will break. You may feel a rush of fluid come out of your vagina.

How long labor lasts

Labor can last for many hours. It can be tough. Your care team will give you support and encouragement. You may get medication to help your pain. You may want to move into different positions so you can be more comfortable. Other things, like massages and warm baths, help, too.

Giving birth

Finally, your cervix opens large enough to let the baby pass through. Your care team will guide you through pushing to help the baby come out. Normally, the baby's head comes out first, then the body.

Conclusion

Finally, after the baby is delivered, your body will push out the placenta. That's the organ that nourished your baby in the womb. Once you've done this, the delivery is done. For more information about vaginal delivery, talk to your doctor.