

## Delayed clamping of umbilical cord may be better for preemies

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Waiting 45 seconds was linked to enhanced motor skills among infants in study.

(HealthDay)—Delayed clamping of a preterm infant's umbilical cord leads to better motor function development, a new study suggests.

"If you can wait 45 seconds before clamping the cord, and that delay has a chance of improving your baby's motor function, wouldn't you make that choice to delay?" researcher Debra Erickson-Owens, an associate professor of nursing at the University of Rhode Island, said in a university news release.

"It makes us consider what other positive things occur with delaying that could result in a long-term impact on infant well-being," Erickson-Owens added.

The study included 161 infants born before 32 weeks of pregnancy.

Researchers assessed them when they were 18 months old. They found that just 13 percent of babies whose umbilical cord clamping was delayed for 30 to 45 seconds had below normal motor development, compared with 28 percent of those whose cords were clamped immediately.

"Motor [development](#) is so critical for babies because it is how they learn, how they experience the world. When you see a baby, he or she is always reaching out, touching, grasping things and even putting things in their mouths," researcher Judith Mercer, a professor emeritus of nursing at the university, said in the news release.

Delayed cord clamping and cord milking allow more of the infant's [blood](#) to return from the placenta and increases iron-rich [red blood cells](#), stem cells and blood volume, the researchers said.

The study findings were published recently in the *Journal of Pediatrics*.

**More information:** The U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development has more about [preterm birth](#).

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