



## Rehabilitation Practices to Reduce Neonatal Asphyxia

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### Description

Neonatal asphyxia, also known as birth asphyxia, is a serious condition that occurs when, a baby does not receive enough oxygen before, during, or immediately after birth. It can lead to significant health complications and long-term disabilities. Rehabilitation plays a vital role in reducing the impact of neonatal asphyxia and promoting the overall development and well-being of affected infants. Through a combination of medical interventions, therapies and supportive care, rehabilitation practices aim to improve the outcomes and quality of life for these infants.

### Key rehabilitation practices to reduce neonatal asphyxia

**Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) care:** The initial phase of rehabilitation for infants with neonatal asphyxia begins in the NICU. Specialized medical care is provided to stabilize the baby's condition, monitor vital signs and address any immediate health concerns. This includes respiratory support, temperature regulation and nutritional support.

**Therapeutic hypothermia:** Therapeutic hypothermia, also known as cooling therapy, is a common practice used to reduce the severity of brain injury in infants with neonatal asphyxia. It involves lowering the baby's body temperature for a specific duration, typically within the first six hours after birth. This therapy helps to protect the brain cells and minimize the risk of long-term neurological damage.

**Physiotherapy:** Physiotherapy plays a vital role in the rehabilitation process by addressing motor impairments and promoting optimal physical development. It involves a range of exercises, stretches and movements tailored to the infant's specific needs. To increase muscle strength, coordination, balance, and general movement, physiotherapists work closely with the infant.

**Occupational therapy:** Occupational therapy focuses on enhancing the infant's ability to perform daily activities and develop essential skills for independent living. Occupational therapists use various techniques and interventions to improve sensory processing, fine motor skills, cognitive abilities and self-care tasks. They collaborate with parents and other caretakers to establish a nurturing environment that fosters growth and functional independence for the infant.

**Speech and language therapy:** Neonatal asphyxia can also impact the development of speech and language skills. Speech and language therapy aims to address communication difficulties and support the infant's language development. Therapists use techniques such as vocalization exercises, oral motor stimulation and language stimulation activities to promote speech production, language comprehension and overall communication abilities.

**Developmental support:** Developmental support focuses on creating an enriching and nurturing environment for the infant's overall growth and development. This includes providing age-appropriate stimulation, promoting bonding and attachment between the baby and caretakers and addressing any psychosocial needs. Developmental support aims to optimize the infant's cognitive, emotional and social development.

**Family-centric care:** Family involvement and support are essential components of the rehabilitation process. Rehabilitation professionals work closely with the baby's family to provide education, training and guidance on how to continue therapeutic activities at home. Family-centric care helps to ensure a holistic approach to rehabilitation and enables the family to actively participate in the infant's recovery journey.

**Multidisciplinary approach:** Rehabilitation for neonatal asphyxia often requires a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, including neonatologists, pediatricians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and psychologists. This collaborative approach ensures comprehensive care and addresses the diverse needs of the infant.

### Conclusion

Rehabilitation practices play a vital role in reducing the impact of neonatal asphyxia and promoting optimal development and recovery. Through a combination of medical interventions, therapies and family-centric care, infants affected by neonatal asphyxia can achieve significant improvements in their motor, cognitive and social abilities. Early intervention and a multidisciplinary approach are key factors in maximizing the potential for functional independence and enhancing the overall quality of life for these infants.