

OdonAssist™ device on the BBC World Service

The OdonAssist™ device is being hailed as the first new technology to assist women in childbirth in a century by the BBC's *Tech Now* programme.

BBC's *Tech Now* showcases breakthrough medical technologies addressing global healthcare challenges.

The OdonAssist™ device works by using a soft, inflatable air cuff to surround the baby's head, creating positive pressure which allows the doctors to assist with birth during contractions. This technology represents the first breakthrough innovation in assisting women in labour since the 1850s when vacuum assisted births were first introduced¹.

Presenter Shiona McCullum spent a day filming with MNHI, clinicians and patients from across the UK. The programme will be repeated on the BBC World Service and the BBC News Channel throughout the autumn, as well as featuring on BBC Breakfast News in the UK.

You can watch the programme here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0031qjy/tech-now-can-new-tech-help-assisted-births>

Charlie Fuller – VP for Europe said:

"I'm really proud to see the OdonAssist device getting this recognition from the BBC.

After so many years of hard work, it's incredibly rewarding to see the technology making a real difference to women and families and to hear such positive feedback from mothers and clinicians. A brilliant milestone for everyone who has helped get the OdonAssist device to this point. And hopefully, just the beginning!"

Gary Cohen CEO, MNHI said:

"On behalf of MNHI I want to express our appreciation to the obstetricians throughout Europe who have introduced the OdonAssist device into their clinical practice, and to the BBC for this broadcast. It is so gratifying to hear mothers speaking about their highly positive birth experiences with the OdonAssist device. It touches at the heart of everything we've done for over 15 years to make this breakthrough innovation a reality."

Hundreds of babies born with the OdonAssist Device

The short documentary comes as Maternal Newborn Health Innovations celebrates more than 600 babies born with the support of the OdonAssist device^{2,3}. Since the device received its CE mark in the spring of 2025, 421 babies^{2,3} have had their birth assisted with the device, with 180 babies² born during clinical trials between 2018 and 2021.

Nia Morris's daughter Maeve was born with the support of the OdonAssist™ device.

"I wanted to give back and raise awareness of how positive our experience with the OdonAssist device was. Before I heard of the OdonAssist device I was really worried about assisted vaginal birth. Now if I needed to have assistance again then I wouldn't hesitate to request it. I want to give back so that other mums can learn about this option and be more informed if it is a choice that is offered to them."

Filming at Royal London Hospital

Clinicians from the Royal London Hospital welcomed Tech Now presenter and journalist Shiona McCullum to witness a staff training simulation of the OdonAssist™ device. The flagship hospital has delivered the highest number of OdonAssist-supported babies, with more than 60 born at the hospital since the device was first introduced in July 2025.

Dr Elizabeth Egbase said:

"I'm incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in the BBC filming and to showcase the work we are doing at Royal London Hospital to support the introduction of the OdonAssist device into our maternity care."

"As Labour Ward Lead and one of the simulation leads and trainers within the Barts Health Education Academy Simulation Centre, I'm passionate about using high-quality in-situ simulation to help teams safely embed innovation into clinical practice. It was a real privilege to share that work and the enthusiasm of our team for this exciting development in maternity care.

Dr Marcus Cabrera-Dandy, obstetric registrar and clinical research fellow, said:

"As clinicians, we may underestimate the emotional impact that marks on a newborn baby can have on parents during those precious first moments and we have seen how this device can help reduce bruising, swelling and other visible marks.

"We will continue our work to evaluate the device, and our aim is to safely incorporate it as an alternative to existing instruments for assisted vaginal birth."

A device backed by years of clinical research in Bristol

The OdonAssist device was first tested on mothers who needed assistance during labour by a pioneering research team lead by clinicians from **Southmead Hospital, Bristol NHS Foundation Trust**. Dr Joanna Crofts told 'Tech Now' how the team developed extraordinary trust with mothers in Bristol to allow them to test the device in frontline clinical practice.

Dr Joanna Crofts said:

“The launch of the OdonAssist device into clinical practice marks the culmination of more than a decade of dedicated collaboration and innovation. The team has been driven by a shared commitment to improving outcomes and experiences for women, babies and families. This achievement has only been possible through the expertise and partnership of a truly multidisciplinary team, including midwives, obstetricians and neonatologists from Southmead Hospital in Bristol, working alongside academics, industry partners, and colleagues from the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England.

Southmead Hospital has established a worldwide reputation for excellence in maternity innovation, and we are incredibly proud to see this pioneering work translated into clinical practice. Most importantly, throughout this journey, women and families have remained at the heart of everything we do. The BBC documentary is a celebration of their contribution, the dedication of our teams, and the power of collaboration to bring meaningful innovation into maternity care.”

For more information please visit: www.mnhi.com

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¹ Blackstone et al. Will vacuum delivery go the way of vaginal breech delivery? Contemp Ob Gyn.2019; Vol 64 No 07.

² Citations 3, 4, 5. <https://mnhi.com/time-for-change#References>

³ Data on file, MNHI. 09 Sep 2026.