

# **Turning a Baby**

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By Dr. Derek Conte

I had an interesting Sunday a couple of weeks ago.

One of my long-term patients succumbed to cancer at 80. An extraordinary woman of great beauty, charisma and will, I was to attend her memorial service that afternoon and say a few words. I took care of her for 10 years.

Earlier that morning I got a call from another patient whose wife, also a patient and in her 9th month of pregnancy, was on orders of strict bed rest at home due to her water having broken a few weeks before.

He explained the situation was tenuous and she was due to enter the hospital the next day to be closely monitored until her delivery. But the situation was exacerbated because the baby was in breech position and a Caesarian section seemed certain as the baby was unlikely to turn by itself in the absence of amniotic fluid.

The husband asked if I did house-calls, if I could come there and perform a technique at their home which can turn the baby head-down. It's called Webster's technique and it involves using gentle pelvic adjustments to the rear, at the sacrum, and specific pressure points to the ligaments in the lower abdomen. I told him I would come.

When I arrived at their home I tried to manage their expectations because the technique recommends that the procedure be repeated every other day for two weeks. I told them the likelihood of success was limited by time and the fact that the lack of amniotic fluid would inhibit movement of the baby. With that, I proceeded. After the assessment, I carefully located the pelvic ligaments and applied a gentle pressure in several locations until the straining ligaments became compliant. It took about 10 minutes and she was able to rise easily for the first time from the bed without the discomfort she'd been experiencing.

I refused payment; it was Sunday; I was on my way to a memorial service. They warmly thanked me for coming; I thanked them for their confidence, and asked them to keep me informed. I went on to the memorial service and celebrated the life of an extraordinary woman whom I had the privilege of caring for and came to know well.

It was unusual to have a day of such extremes. A great sense of quiet followed me that day; very strange and very fulfilling.

The next day, the same husband and father-to-be called my office from the hospital. He told me that when they examined his wife that morning they found the baby had indeed turned, head-down, and a Caesarian would be avoided. A healthy baby boy was born to them a few days later. I told my staff the story and they were overjoyed.

I was so pleased to have been useful and a part of their lives and am blessed to have this work. This is the way it goes in the healthcare profession; doctors the world over are doing the same, and bigger things, with their patients every day. - Many take great personal risks to do so.

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