

Information Sheet

Preventing a posterior labour

If more information is required please don't hesitate to ask your Midwife, Doctor or Maternal & Child Health Nurse

"Occipito posterior" position of your baby means the baby's head is facing your belly button, with the back of its head & spine pressing against your spine.

This results in increased back pain in pregnancy, more pressure on your bladder and often the baby's head does not engage properly.

This means that it is harder for labour to start naturally, so posterior babies are more likely to be overdue.

When labour does start, there is often increased back pain, irregular contractions and slower dilation of the cervix, which cause a longer labour as the contractions rotate the baby to a better position.

Having an epidural means it is less likely the baby will rotate naturally. As baby cannot flex its head as well when posterior, the diameter of its head as it enters and rotates through the pelvis in labour is larger also.

Practical steps to avoid a posterior position

The baby's head is the heaviest part of its body due to the density of bone there. You need to encourage gravity to keep baby facing your back.

- Watch TV while kneeling upright, on hands & knees, sitting on a dining chair or sitting on the chair facing its back. Always make sure your knees are lower than your pelvis, and that your chest is tilted slightly forward.
- Use yoga positions while resting, reading or watching TV, eg Tailor pose (sitting with

an upright back, the soles of your feet together and knees out to the side.



- Don't cross your legs as this reduces space at the front of your pelvis encouraging baby to gravitate to the back where there is more room.
- In the car or on the couch use a wedge cushion or pillow so that your pelvis is tilted forwards.
- Sleep on your left side, not your back. Leave your left leg straight and bend your right leg at a 90° angle supported by a pillow



- Swim with your tummy downwards eg. breaststroke and front crawl as the leg movements help open your pelvis and settle baby in a good position.

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- Use a fitball to sit on. You tend to do lots of pelvic rocking unconsciously when sitting upright on the ball.



Remember that you can contact your midwife or the hospital maternity ward at any time if you are concerned.

- Keep active, walk as much as possible. Remember, an upright position makes your pelvis 'roomier' and helps gravity rotate baby's head to the front.
- Try relaxation & visualisation techniques. Imagine baby with its bottom to the front.
- Water immersion in bath, spa or pool while leaning on forearms on the side may help rotate baby, promote relaxation and take weight off pelvis.
- Take up a knee-chest position for an hour or so every day to once again help gravity rotate the baby.



We welcome feedback at:

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The information in this brochure is intended as a guide to one of the services provided by BRHS and is correct at the time of publishing.

Issue date: JANUARY 2016 **Our Ref:** MS0010

Bairnsdale Regional Health Service is located on the traditional land of the Gunaikurnai people.

My team *is* **BRHS**