

# Breech

## What is a breech position?

Breech position occurs when a baby does not turn so the head is pointing down near the woman's due date. If this happens, the baby's buttocks, legs, or feet may be in place to come out of the vagina first during birth. Breech presentation occurs in approximately 3% of full-term births.

## Why does this happen?

The reasons for a breech presentation are not always known. However, breech presentation is more common when:

- The woman has had more than one pregnancy
- It is a multiple gestation (twins or more)
- The uterus has too much or too little amniotic fluid
- The uterus is not normal in shape or has abnormal growths, such as fibroids
- The placenta partly or fully covers the opening of the uterus (placenta previa)
- The baby is born prematurely

## Can we help the baby change presentation?

### Exercises

- Breech Tilt
  - With an empty stomach and in loose clothing on a hard surface, rest the pelvis on pillows about 12 inches off the ground. Keep the head and neck on the ground. This can be done twice a day for 10 minutes. Slow abdominal breathing helps keep abdominal muscles relaxed.
  - Walk around for 10 minutes after each session to encourage the gravitational effect to help the baby turn.
  
- Forward Tilt
  - On a hard, flat surface, place shoulders flat on the floor and raise the buttocks in the air. Breathe slowly and deeply while holding this position for 10 minutes, twice a day.
  - Walk around for 10 minutes after each session to encourage the gravitational effect to help the baby turn.

- Crawl on all fours
  - Crawling allows gravity to help bring the baby's head down. It also helps to open the pelvic outlet.

### Moxibustion

Moxibustion, also known as mugwort or *Artemisia vulgaris*, is used by acupuncturists to aid in turning a breech baby. By stimulating certain pressure points with the moxibustion, you can encourage your baby to turn into a position more favorable for a vaginal delivery. These pressure points should not be stimulated prior to 37 weeks.

### External Cephalic Version

In some cases, your provider may recommend the physician attempt an external cephalic version (ECV). This is a medical procedure in which the physician attempts to turn the baby manually out of the breech position. Your physician will discuss this with you if it is an option.

Delivery: If your baby is in a breech position close to your due date, and these techniques do not help the baby turn, a Cesarean delivery (C-section) may be recommended. This is to promote a healthy and safe delivery for your baby. Your provider will discuss this with you.