

Further information

If you would like more information, talk to your LMC.

Written information is also available from:

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists RANZCOG 'Breech presentation at the end of your pregnancy' 2019 <https://ranzocg.edu.au/womens-health/patient-information-resources/breech-presentation-at-the-end-of-your-pregnancy>

You can also talk to your LMC about complementary therapies that may encourage your baby to turn, such as acupuncture, moxibustion and postural exercises.



Turning your breech baby

What you need to know

Why is my baby breech?

Most babies are born head-first but about 3-4% are feet-first or bottom-first.

We are not sure why babies end up breech. It may be the shape of your pelvis or the location of your placenta, or they just started bottom-down and didn't have enough space to turn over.

Is breech position a problem?

The head is the largest part of a baby's body so a head-first birth is safer because there is less risk of baby getting stuck.

If your baby stays breech, you will be offered the option of an External cephalic version (ECV) – turning the baby to head-down. If this is not successful you will be offered the choice of either a caesarean or vaginal birth.

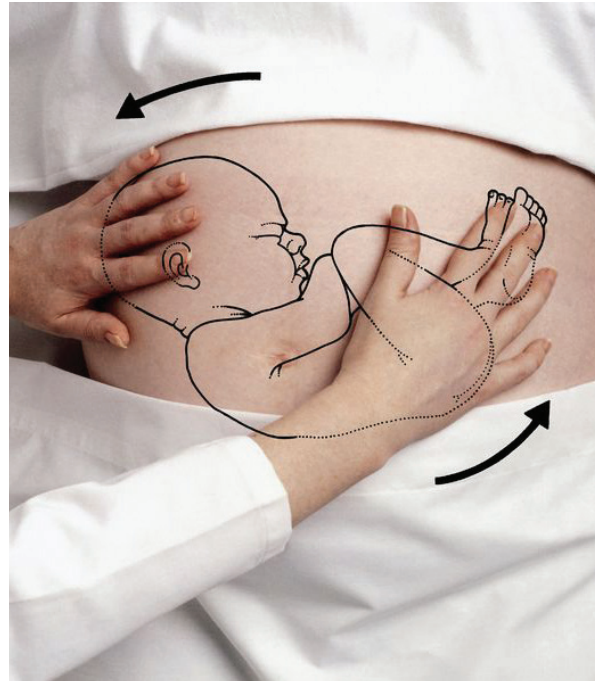
The risks, benefits and alternatives will be discussed with you by your Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) and an obstetrician.



Turning your baby using external cephalic version (ECV)


External cephalic version (ECV) is where a specialist presses on your tummy and gently guides your baby to a head-down position. ECV happens in hospital and is successful in about half of all attempts.

It is not known to cause labour to start however there is a small risk (about one in 200) that you may need to have an emergency caesarean section if there are complications with the procedure.



You will not be offered an ECV if:

You are pregnant with twins; your baby is not growing well; your waters have broken or you have had any vaginal bleeding in the past seven days.

You will not be offered an ECV if you are already planning to have a caesarean section 

What happens when they turn my baby?

It is a good idea to bring a support person with you to hospital on the day of your procedure.

The specialist will scan your baby and you will be given some medicine to avoid contractions starting. Your baby's heartbeat will be monitored to make sure they are healthy.

The doctor will then press on your tummy to move your baby into a head-down position; it may take a few tries.

It can be uncomfortable but should not be painful – you can ask the doctor to stop at any time if you find it too uncomfortable. The procedure only takes about 15 minutes.

After the procedure, we monitor your baby's heartbeat again before you go home.

