

# Posterior Babies

During birth it is the baby's job to turn and rotate into the best position, and it is the mother's job to dilate her cervix. It's a lot easier for the mother to do her part when the baby does his.

## What is a posterior baby?

A posterior baby has its back facing the mothers back, otherwise called occiput posterior.



Mothers with babies in the posterior position are more likely to have long and painful labours. This is because during the birth process the baby needs to rotate all the way around in order to be born. Babies cannot fully flex their heads when they are in a posterior position, and the diameter of the head is larger than that of an occiput anterior baby.

The most desirable position for most babies to be in is OA (occiput anterior). In the anterior position the baby can easily tuck its chin onto its chest to fit through the pelvis as easily as possible. However, having a baby in an OP position does not guarantee that you will have back labour or a long birth—there are some women that deliver just fine with the baby in an OP position.



Occiput Posterior (OP)



Occiput Anterior (OA)

## How can you tell if your baby is in a posterior position?

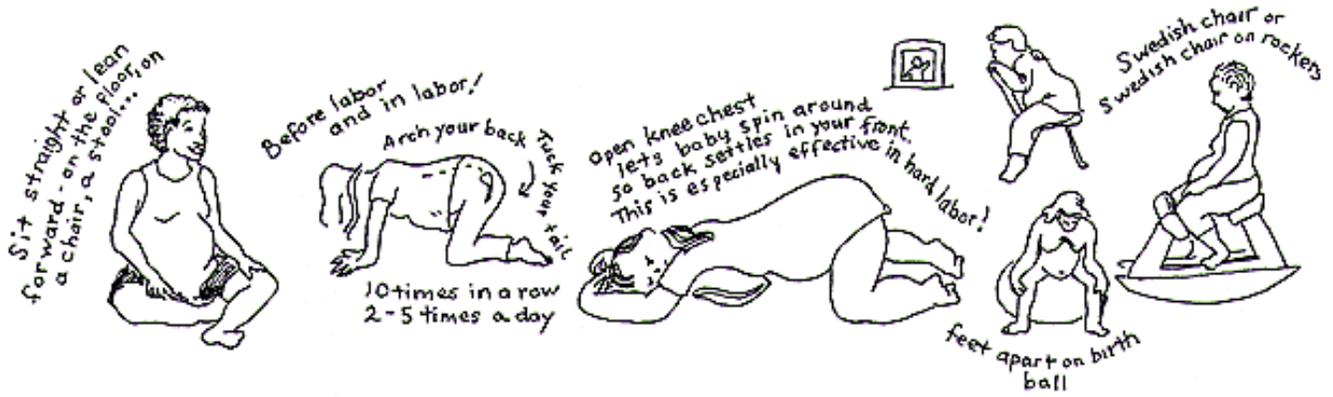
- You may feel a lot of the baby's movements in the front (like the punches and kicks)
- Your abdomen may appear flat below your belly button
- Your midwife can tell when she palpates your belly in clinic

## What makes babies turn posterior?

- Sitting in cars
- Leaning back in comfortable sofas
- Limited physical activity
- Poor posture
- Crossing your legs

## How can I prevent my baby from being posterior?

The easiest way to not have back labour is to prevent the baby from getting into an OP position to begin with. You can start right now!!



- Avoid all reclining positions. How are you positioned right now? Are you lounging back and reading this? You should always sit with your pelvis tilted forward. This can be done by always having your knees below your pelvis and your back straight. Try sitting on a birth ball or sitting backwards on a kitchen chair. Experiment!!
- Hands and Knees positions!!! They are all good!! Do them while you are watching TV or reading a book. You could get into that position right now while you finish reading this. Scrub the floor on your hands and knees. Crawling around in this position is great.
- Do pelvic rocks 10 times in a row 2-5 times a day. Go on your hands and knees and rock your pelvis up and down (alternately arching your back by tucking your pelvis under and then straightening, like the mad cat pose in yoga). While you are down there do some crawling too.
- Sleep on your left side, with your left leg straight and your right leg at a 90-degree angle supported by a pillow or two. This creates a 'hammock' for your baby and will encourage the baby to have their back cradled into your tummy.
- Pregnant in the winter? Babies like to have their backs warm. If you are pregnant in the winter and are not wearing a parka that does up in the front (due to a large belly) this may be a problem for your baby. Your baby may decide to correct this by turning her back towards yours to stay warm and cozy.

## How can I get my posterior baby to rotate?

If you know that your baby is in a posterior position there are many things you can do to help them to turn. These can be done before and during labour.

- Keep on doing all the positions and activities in the previous section.
- Talk to baby. There is no harm in just politely asking him to change position.
- Use hot and cold. Babies like to turn their backs towards warmth. You can place an ice pack on your back and some warm towels on your belly. This can be done in the hands and knees position or in the lying position.
- Swim belly down

- Don't do squats until you know that baby is in a good position. Squats can help to engage a baby's head in the pelvis but if the baby is in a posterior position you want to give them as much opportunity to turn. Wait until you know baby is OA. Once baby is OA, do the squats to keep them in that position.
- Chiropractic adjustments. Sometimes the body is just not aligned properly, which can force the baby into a posterior position. An adjustment may correct the alignment problem and allow the baby to get into an anterior position.
- Acupuncture. Techniques to turn breech babies can also work for posterior ones.
- Homeopathic remedies. There are some that work with the muscles of the uterus and help the baby into an anterior position.
- Relax!! Take a bath!
- Many women who listen to their bodies and assume positions that feel comfortable to them will rotate their babies during labour. Women can even give birth to babies that decide not to turn at all—baby will come out sunny side up so mum can see baby's little face.
- Don't lose hope. Due to the variations in pelvis shape, position of the placenta, position of the umbilical cord and more, a posterior baby can actually be the best presentation for some women. If you have wholeheartedly tried all of these things but the baby remains posterior, that may be the best position for your body and this baby.