External Cephalic Version (ECV)

An external cephalic version (ECV) is a procedure that is done in an attempt to turn a baby from a head-up position (breech) to a head-down position (vertex).

Why is the version done?

- The head-down position is the safest position for delivery.
- A breech baby increases a woman’s chance of having a Cesarean Section and may increase the risk of complications for both mom and baby if she has a vaginal birth.

How do you prepare for a version?

- Your provider will tell you of any specific preparations before the procedure.
  - Most often, you may eat a light meal (such as tea and toast) before coming to your appointment.
  - If your stomach is too full it may be uncomfortable to have this procedure done.

How is the procedure done?

- You and your baby will be monitored before the procedure. The provider will check the position of the baby and the amount of amniotic fluid around the baby.
- A small amount of medicine to relax your uterus is given through a shot in your arm.
- The provider will place gel and his/her hands on your abdomen and attempt to turn the baby manually. You may feel some pressure or discomfort as the provider is trying to turn the baby.
- The baby’s heart rate will be monitored again after the procedure is completed.

What are the complications?

- The possible complications include:
  - leaking of the bag of water
  - tangling of the umbilical cord
  - separation of the placenta with bleeding
  - fetal distress requiring immediate delivery
• The chance of one of these problems occurring is less than 3%. This means that 97% of the time everything is fine. Many safeguards are taken to minimize these risks, including monitoring the baby during and after the procedure.

• The version is performed on the Labor and Delivery unit where other providers can help if it is necessary.

Home Instructions
Please call your doctor or the hospital (415) 353-1787 should any of the following occur:

• Leaking of fluid or blood from your vagina
• Cramping ______________.
• Baby is less active than usual