



#1 Free Legal Website

FindLaw.com is the leading and largest online resource for legal information. For basic legal issues to more complex ones, you'll find thousands of helpful articles, a legal community to get answers to your specific questions, an attorney directory, blogs, news, DIY forms, and much more.

Birth Injuries: Cerebral Palsy and Erbs Palsy

Some of the most common birth injuries result from two very different conditions known as cerebral palsy and Erbs (or brachial) palsy. Both cerebral and Erbs palsy are often the result of complications during child delivery itself, though cerebral palsy can sometimes occur before or some time after delivery.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy is the generic term for a number of disorders affecting a baby's brain function and body movement. Cerebral palsy can be the result of an injury to a baby's brain in the womb, during delivery, or some time after birth. It can also be caused by a lack of oxygen flow to a baby's brain during delivery.

Some situations that can cause or contribute to cerebral palsy include:

- A treating physician/obstetrician's failure to recognize the need to provide adequate oxygen to the baby, such as by caesarean section, or unreasonable delay in performing the procedure;
- A mother's use of a harmful prescription drug during pregnancy
- Prolonged bleeding in the baby's brain after delivery, usually due to head trauma
- Extremely premature birth

Symptoms of cerebral palsy in a child may take some time to show up, but can include the following: slow development in terms of rolling over, crawling, smiling, and talking; abnormal or decreased muscle tone, or "floppiness" of limbs; unusual posture; poor co-ordination; involuntary movements; and vision or hearing problems.

Erbs (or Brachial) Palsy

Erbs (or brachial) palsy occurs in about two out of every 1,000 child deliveries, when a baby suffers injury to the brachial plexus. The brachial plexus is a group of nerves that travel from the spinal cord up the arm, supplying the arms and hands. Erbs palsy happens most often during delivery when excessive pressure is put on the baby's head, neck, or shoulder because of difficulty delivering the shoulder area (known as "shoulder dystocia"). The condition occurs most frequently in babies of higher-than-average birth weight, and can happen when forceps or vacuum devices are used with too much pressure during delivery. The brachial plexus is simply stretched too far until important nerves are torn or ruptured. Symptoms of Erbs palsy can include paralysis or limpness in a baby's arm, limited or no movement in hands and fingers, and loss of sensation in the hands and fingers. Often the baby will simply hold the affected arm very close to the body, and will appear to be unable to move the arm itself, the hands, or the fingers.

Complications from the condition known as Erbs palsy are typically the result of a treating physician/obstetrician's:

- Failure to recognize that a caesarean section should have been performed, based on the baby's size
- Failure to adequately deliver the baby in situations involving "shoulder dystocia"
- Use of excessive pressure on the baby's head, neck, or shoulder during delivery

Erbs palsy usually results in a baby's inability to fully rotate and flex his or her arm, and if a nerve is torn during delivery, permanent nerve damage may result. If no tearing has occurred, bruising and swelling around the nerve should subside and normal movement become possible in a few months. If a baby is diagnosed with Erbs palsy, treatment and therapy such as immobilization of the arm and special exercises may help to improve or eliminate the condition. If the condition is severe or permanent enough, surgery may be necessary to correct the problem.

Featured Law Firm

- [Walkup, Melodia, Kelly & Schoenberger Birth Injury Lawyers](#)

- [Chicago Birth Injury Lawyer](#)

FINDLAW.COM EMPOWERS PEOPLE WITH TRUSTED, TIMELY AND INTELLIGENT LEGAL INFORMATION

BLOGS – FindLaw Blogs present timely news that has real-life implications, deliver important information and discuss law-related entertainment.

FINDLAW ANSWERS – A vibrant, interactive online community where everyday people can ask legal questions and get real-time answers from legal professionals and others with similar experiences.

NEWS & NEWSLETTERS – Updated throughout the day and night and covering a wide range of legal topics, FindLaw.com's News page presents current legal news, keeping people informed and educated.

FIND A LAWYER – An easy-to-search database of more than one million lawyers and law firms. It provides detailed information, enabling people to contact a qualified lawyer when they are ready.



DO-IT-YOURSELF FORMS & CONTRACTS – FindLaw.com provides accurate legal documents for common legal matters. Choose from a library of easy-to-use, low-cost, accurate legal forms for everyday legal issues.

FINDLAW VIDEO – On FindLaw.com, you'll find an online directory of more than 1,500 short videos dedicated exclusively to legal topics and attorney and law firm profiles.

Connect With Us

FindLaw.com has an entire social media team dedicated to providing our users with as many options as possible to join, participate in, and learn from the FindLaw community. Some of the social key channels are the following:



[FindLaw for Consumers on Facebook](#)

Making the law easy to access with interactive legal updates aimed at starting conversations, informing followers of their legal rights and providing a forum for questions and resources



[@FindLawConsumer on Twitter](#)

Tweeting interesting, entertaining and informative legal news everyday

HAVE A LEGAL QUESTION?
NEED TO FIND AN AFFORDABLE,
QUALIFIED ATTORNEY?

Protect yourself, your family or
your business with a legal plan
or form from LegalStreet

www.LEGALSTREET.com

Copyright © 2013 FindLaw, a Thomson Reuters business. All rights reserved. The information contained in this article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The use and distribution of this article is subject to the Creative Commons BY-NC-ND license, which can be viewed at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. You must attribute the article by providing the title of the article, FindLaw copyright notice and link to the original work. You may not use the article for commercial purposes and you may not alter or transform this article in any way.

FindLaw[®]
A Thomson Reuters Business