



Chiropractic Newsletter

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The Vital Adjustment

Katie had been in labor for several hours and was having great difficulties. Her baby, Ethan, had what is known as shoulder dystocia, which basically means his shoulder had become stuck on the pubic bone as he was going through the birth canal. This happens in about 1 in 200 births. He also happened to have the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck, which happens in 1 in every 3 births. This combination led to decreased oxygen and sent his entire system into shock.

The medical center was a two-minute drive away. I remember the head midwife, Monica, looked up and locked eyes with me. “Call 911 in case we need to transfer the baby and mom to the hospital.” As I hung up the phone and returned to the birth room I heard the most magical sound: The baby gave a feeble cry. Monica picked up the little baby boy and placed him skin to skin on his mother’s breast. Yet the room was still filled with tension. Was the baby completely OK?

When baby Ethan was placed on his mom’s chest, his breathing was still uneven, his color blue, and his cries weak. As the midwife checked his vitals, she told the EMT who had just arrived not to leave yet. Then she looked at me and nodded. I asked Katie and her husband, Ben, if I could adjust baby Ethan. Ben squeezed his wife’s shoulder and they jokingly reminded me that that’s why I was there. It was such an inspiration to see this strong couple keep up their sense of humor with everything going on.



Continue reading on page 2

Keeping Ethan skin-to-skin on his mother, I carefully checked his spine. It was evident he had several cervical (neck) and thoracic (upper back) subluxations or spinal joint misalignments. These were most likely caused due to the trauma of his birth.

I became very calm. It was now just baby Ethan and me; the rest of the world faded away. Using gentle fingers and advanced clinical knowledge provided by my ICPA training, I adjusted Ethan's little spine. The areas of his thoracic spine that were restricted were also responsible for directing the nerve supply to his heart and lungs. Seconds after his adjustment,

Monica began to check his vitals and she started to smile broadly. "His vitals are normal," she told us. "Everything is OK."

With the interference to the nervous system removed, Ethan's body was able to self-regulate.

This is the power of an adjustment, and why it's important to have a chiropractor present at birth. Ethan's story is a reminder to all parents-to-be of the importance of having a good birth team, one that works together with the mom's and baby's best interests at heart.

—Madison Grzeszkowiak, D.C.

PW Issue 46

