Malrotation and Volvulus: Information for Parents

# What is malrotation?

It is when the intestines do not sit in the belly the right way.

# What is volvulus?

When the intestines do not sit in the belly the right way (malrotation), the intestines can twist around one of the big arteries that supplies blood to the intestine and cut off the blood supply to part of the intestines. The twist is known as the volvulus.

**What causes malrotation and volvulus?** Both malrotation and volvulus are problems that happened when your baby was developing. They are not caused by anything you did or did not do. The intestines did not rotate and move around inside the amniotic sac like they should have.

**What is the treatment for malrotation?** Malrotation by itself is harmless and your baby can have malrotation without a volvulus. However, having malrotation places your baby at an increased risk for a volvulus; therefore, surgery will be needed at some point to correct this.

**What is the treatment for a volvulus?** Immediate surgery is needed for any baby who has a volvulus, because the blood supply to the intestines is being cut off.

# More Information

Some babies with a volvulus may have a lot of intestine that has to be removed because there was not enough blood flow to it for a long period of time. If this is the case for your baby, the surgeon will have to create an ostomy (an intestine loop that sits on the outside of the abdomen, as pictured below). This is not usually permanent, but your baby may go home with an ostomy.



Babies with a volvulus will need to receive intravenous (IV) nutrition through a special IV called a peripheral inserted central catheter line. This will allow your baby to grow while the intestines heal.

Your baby’s providers will be waiting for your baby to have a bowel movement before feedings are restarted. Breast milk feedings are preferred and will be given in small amounts in the beginning. As feedings are advanced, the IV nutrition will be decreased.

Your baby may have a recurrent volvulus after surgery. It is important to watch for symptoms for several weeks after surgery.