

Birth Injuries Very Difficult on Families

By Douglas D. Brannon, Esq. of [Brannon & Associates](#)

A family awaits a new member as a mother is wheeled into the delivery room. All examinations and ultrasounds indicate the baby is normal and developing right on schedule.

However, during the birthing process there are complications. The obstetrician and delivery room personnel fail to recognize and properly address the situation, resulting in injury to the newborn. Depending on the severity, the injury could have devastating long-term effects on both child and family.

Though not pleasant to think about, there are a number of things that can go wrong before and during the delivery of a baby. Sometimes these things cannot be avoided. The baby might be premature or in an abnormal birthing presentation. The mother may have a prolonged or difficult labor.

Delivery personnel do the best job they can in trying to prevent injury. More often than not in these cases, a skillful and experienced delivery staff will be successful in minimizing any damage.

However, there are other instances where negligence on the part of delivery personnel may be responsible for an injury during the birthing process. Some of these include:

- Improper use of forceps.
- Improper monitoring of the mother during the pregnancy process.
- Delivery personnel not giving proper attention to a mother in labor; leaving her unattended.
- Delivery personnel not recognizing the need for a Caesarean section.
- Failure to properly deal with an emergency such as fetal distress.
- Lack of preparedness for problems that should have been detected during pregnancy.
- Rough handling or unnecessary maneuvering of the baby during delivery.

These injuries can have short-term or lifelong effects. Following are some of the damages that can be caused by birth injuries:

- Bruising, cutting or swelling around the head from extraction by vacuum or forceps.
- Facial damage or paralysis from aggressive or badly-positioned forceps extraction.
- Swelling caput succedaneum or bleeding of the scalp due to rough delivery.
- Bruising or bleeding of the Cephalohematoma underneath the skull, which is sometimes caused by rough delivery. This can lead to seizures and other complications.
- Broken bones. Many times this might involve a shoulder or clavicle due to a rough delivery or inappropriate procedures during a breech or unorthodox birth.

- Cerebral palsy, a brain injury that can result from rough birth or neglect by delivery personnel.

What Can Be Done?

If neglect or malpractice is suspected, families should immediately contact a birth injuries attorney. A good place to start would be to find a medical malpractice lawyer with a good track record. An experienced personal injury lawyer will be familiar with many scenarios surrounding birth injury cases, and will be able to take a family through the claims process step-by-step.

No amount of money can reverse the damage to a child who has been injured at birth due to a mistake or neglectful act by doctors or delivery room personnel. However, compensation awarded to families for birth injury cases will ease the burden if long-term care is needed for an injured or affected child.

Sources:

Attorneys.com. *How to Hire a Birth Injury Lawyer*. Retrieved on March 4, 2011 from: http://www.attorneys.com/legal_center/articles/birth_injury_cerebral_erbs_palsy/s/c/how_to_hire_a_birth_injury_lawyer/

Children's Hospital Boston. *What is a Birth Injury?* Retrieved on March 4, 2011 from: <http://www.childrenshospital.org/az/Site631/mainpageS631P0.html>