

# Chiropractic Newsletter | Discover Chiropractic

## The First Adjustment

We are entering an era of change and remembrance. As trust in systemic healthcare fades and a deep desire grows to return to what makes us most human, birth has become a sacred threshold of reclamation.

Salutogenic Birth is a paradigm of birth that honors the innate capacity of the mother, the process of birth itself, and the resources available to her and her partner to build the skills and confidence to bring life into the world. In this model, it is not about location—home, birth center, or hospital—nor the expertise of a medical provider, midwife, or doula—it is about recognizing that the ability to create and give birth to life innately and purposefully exists within the hands of the family.

It is a return to the original blueprint: trust in the woman's body and support that empowers her to cultivate the skills, confidence, and coherence for birth. The concept of salutogenesis—the creation or birth of health—reminds us that health is a living continuum, not an outcome. For mothers and fathers alike, what matters most is the process: preparing the mind, heart, and body for the profound experience and activity of birth.

While setting and professional services matter and many families are choosing home as the most congruent birth location, the deepest meaning arises from the sense of coherence and connection developed and shared by the mother, baby, and partner. In the salutogenic model of birth, families cultivate their skills, resources, trust, and confidence long before the activity begins—and rather than depending on a specific outcome, location, or provider, they remember the innate intelligence woven through the process.

A homebirth isn't just about location, it is a return home to the power, wisdom, and sovereignty of the body, the birth process, and the sacredness of life itself. It can renew a family's sense of coherence, offering the imprint that life—and health—are created from within.

**There are few times in life that are more sacred than a birth.** That sacred dance between mom and baby brings with it such magic. Something you can feel and almost see in the air—a love so palpable it is undeniable.

Amanda was almost 41 weeks pregnant and her three children were so eager to meet their little sister. Maci, the oldest, was determined to catch her on her way into the world. Amanda is a holistic mama to the core—with a deep, inherent trust in her body, its wisdom, and in her ability to safely bring her baby into the world.

She was more than 30 hours into labor when I arrived at her house—and she was feeling exhausted. This was her fourth birth experience—her third planned home birth—and her longest labor yet. The kids were milling around as she labored in her living room. Dad was ordering lunch and the midwives were quietly observing from the couch and the kitchen.

Amanda had been getting adjusted throughout her pregnancy and her labor was progressing, but very slowly. Her midwife, Jennifer, had been there for her two previous home births and wasn't sure why things weren't moving at Amanda's normal pace. Every birth is different, and with no signs of distress and a shared trust in the body and the process of birth, all of us embraced things progressing in their own timing.

## Chiropractic Newsletter | Discover Chiropractic

I assessed her for subluxation and gently adjusted her pelvis and upper cervical spine. She felt some physical relief and continued laboring. I checked her again a few hours later, but her body was balanced. With night falling and her older children asleep in their beds, Amanda was desperate for rest, so she laid down to try to sleep between contractions. Her birth team (two midwives, a doula, and a birth photographer) who had been present for more than 2 days—and me—all took the opportunity to camp out on the floor around her bed.

This silent support system of women woven all around her—heads popping up as she moaned through more difficult contractions and settling back down as she quieted. “This,” I thought to myself as I closed my eyes, “this is the village and the love so many of us are missing.” I was touched by the simplicity and gentle loving presence that was focused not on intervention but on holding space, shifting and accommodating for this sacred dance, allowing it to be what is, and supporting families through this passage.

In this moment of inspiration, it hit me. It’s the baby’s position. She’s not engaged over the cervix. It’s a biomechanical birth problem. It was clear from mom and baby’s standing posture that the baby’s body was positioned forward over Amanda’s pubic bone (see photo). This created a mechanical challenge because the baby’s head and body weight weren’t able to directly align over the cervix for full engagement and labor progression.

At this point, she was more than two full days into hard labor and Amanda was beginning to show signs of true exhaustion. All the women stirred as Amanda got up to use the bathroom. I quietly whispered my observation to the midwife, explaining what I thought was happening. I said, “Let’s support her belly with a woven wrap to help the baby’s body get more engaged over the cervix. If we can encourage her to have a few contractions upright, or leaning back, while someone holds the wrap, I think it will help.”

As she returned to the bedroom, Jennifer invited Amanda to do a few contractions as we discussed. With the wrap held taut and in position, just in time for the next wave of contractions to come, Amanda let out the most primal sounds of the birth so far, and the labor pattern began to shift. She labored for several more rounds of contractions, held by the wrap and her birth team around her. As things quickly progressed, she moved to the bed where, with the continued support of the wrap, Luna soon made her entrance.

I watched with awe as I saw her head emerge. The magic of those first moments of life—the love that built with each contraction—through the long days of labor, the support and presence of family, friends, and the birth team—what a wonder to behold.

## Chiropractic Newsletter | Discover Chiropractic

I saw the sweet relief wash over Amanda as she brought Luna to her chest for the first time. They attempted to nurse, but Luna seemed physically uncomfortable and disinterested in breastfeeding. Knowing how hard the birth process can be on babies, especially longer labors, Amanda asked me to check Luna. She was less than an hour old when she received her first, gentle, chiropractic assessment and adjustment.

As I was holding her and getting ready to give her to dad, I mentioned, "It's not uncommon for newborns to spit up the fluid they ingested during the birth process —often right after their adjustment." No sooner did I finish my statement than she spit up copious amounts of fluid. Dad laughed, thanked me for warning him, and noted how her face and body seemed so much more relaxed. He gave Luna back to her mom, and she latched at the breast for the first time with ease and grace.

Chiropractic care belongs at every birth—for mothers, for babies—to guard the sacred trust of life itself. It honors the body's innate wisdom and reminds us that with the gentlest of skillful support, we can do what we were beautifully designed to do: bring life into the world with love, trust, and freedom.

By Mackenzie McNamara, DC

*Appears in Pathways to Family  
Wellness Magazine Issue #88*