

**Title:** Diagnosis and Management of Cecal Volvulus: A Rare Postpartum Cause of Intestinal Obstruction

**Authors:** Arfa Ul-Haque, B.S., Carolyn Zahler-Miller, M.D., FACOG, NCMP

**Affiliations:** Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University, Augusta, GA.

**Background:**

Cecal volvulus is a rare condition in which the cecum rotates around its mesentery and results in large bowel obstruction. Cecal volvulus accounts for 1-3% of all cases of large bowel obstruction. Its incidence during pregnancy and the postpartum period ranges from 1 in 2500 to 1 in 3500 cases. It typically presents with abdominal pain, abdominal distention, and obstipation. Prompt management of cecal volvulus is critical as it could progress to bowel ischemia, necrosis, or perforation, with the potential for significant maternal and fetal mortality in childbearing patients.

**Objective/Purpose:**

We present a case of a postpartum cecal volvulus in a 27 y/o G3P2012 female following cesarean section under general anesthesia at 39 weeks 5 days gestation for breech presentation. On postpartum day 2, the patient had persistent abdominal distention and was not passing flatus. She was diagnosed with and treated for suspected ileus. She continued to deteriorate clinically, with hypoxia and worsening abdominal pain and distention. A computed tomography scan of the abdomen revealed a dilated cecum and mesenteric swirling concerning for cecal volvulus. She underwent an exploratory laparotomy, which confirmed the diagnosis, and a right hemicolectomy with primary anastomosis was performed due to the condition of the bowel nearing likely perforation. Following successful repair of the cecal volvulus, the patient experienced restoration of bowel function and was discharged 3 days later.

**Methods:** Case Report

**Results:** N/A

**Conclusion:**

In post-operative patients with abdominal pain and distention, although rare, cecal volvulus should be considered as a potential cause. Urgent diagnosis via computed tomography of the abdomen, with prompt surgical management is imperative to prevent septic shock or death. Mortality in patients with volvulus increases with a delay in management and CT findings are not always specific. Because of the rare incidence of this condition, and the difficulties in diagnosis, a high index of suspicion is imperative to avoid potentially fatal maternal and neonatal outcomes in peripartum patients.

## References:

1. Shirazi, M., Feizabad, E., Amini Harandi, M., Torkzaban, M., Sharifi, M., Shirazi, M., & Ghaemi, M. (2021). Atypical presentation of ileocecal volvulus in a postpartum woman: a case report. *Clinical Case Reports*, 9(4), 2129–2131. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ccr3.3963>
2. Ferjaoui MA, Arfaoui R, Haddad A, Hannechi MA, Khedhri S, Neji K. Cecal volvulus: A rare post-partum complication. *Int J Surg Case Rep*. 2021 Oct;87:106461. doi: 10.1016/j.ijscr.2021.106461. Epub 2021 Sep 30. PMID: 34607265; PMCID: PMC8496163.
3. Perdue PW, Johnson HW Jr, Stafford PW. Intestinal obstruction complicating pregnancy. *Am J Surg*. 1992 Oct;164(4):384-8. doi: 10.1016/s0002-9610(05)80910-9. PMID: 1415949.