

# Mrs Hebjerk's sign

She wasn't hanging like a limp rag over the side of the bed the way she usually did when she threw up. No, she was lying stretched out. That bothered her mother, and she told the doctor about it when she rang to get help for her four year-old.

The young doctor had heard of Kernig and Brudzinski, but the professor under whom he studied had not talked about Mrs Hebjerk's sign and there was nothing about it in the books either. So the mother had to ring again. Now she was lying not like a bendy branch but as stiff as a board. This time the doctor found Kernig positive and admitted her for meningitis. That's what she had.

The professor hadn't seen it himself or read about it.

So, with the mother's permission, he added Fru Hebjerk's sign to the list of symptoms and signs of meningitis – after Kernig and Brudzinski. The list needed a good Norwegian name.

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*With thanks to all those mothers whose observations enable a diagnosis for babies and infants to be made in time.*

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**Conflicts of interest: None declared**

*Submitted 24 April 2011 and approved 18 August 2011. Medical editor Anne Kveim Lie.*



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