

Sanford neurosurgeon removed clot in 9-day-old baby using unique method

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A 9-day-old baby who suffered a normally fatal stroke was saved after a Sanford Health cerebrovascular neurosurgeon removed the clot by combining mechanical and medicinal therapies. The unique case, completed by Alexander Drofa, M.D., is published in *Pediatric Neurosurgery*.

Drofa and his surgical team at the Sanford Brain and Spine Center in Fargo reestablished blood flow to the infant's brain by administering clot-dissolving drugs and mechanically clearing the blockage using a stent retriever designed to apply force to the clot. A [stroke](#) occurs when [blood flow](#) to the [brain](#) is cut off.

The case, said Drofa, was especially challenging because the baby had entered a coma. According to a 2005 study published in *Brain*, coma in such instances is a strong predictor of death. Additionally, mechanical removal of stroke clots is rare in children because they don't often suffer strokes.

"We believe this to be the youngest stroke patient in the world to have been successfully treated with a stent retriever and drugs," said Drofa. "Because of the severity of this case, it was necessary for the neurosurgery team to explore an aggressive therapy to give the infant a better chance at survival. The positive outcome is promising for future cases of this nature."

Drofa is a fellowship-trained cerebrovascular neurosurgeon who

practices at the Sanford Neuroscience Clinic in Fargo. He offers traditional neurosurgery procedures, complex skull-base surgery and advanced interventional care for stroke and aneurysm.

The study appears in a recent issue of *Pediatric Neurosurgery*, which publishes new information and observations in [pediatric neurosurgery](#), neurology, neuroradiology and neuropathology.

More information: Alexander Drofa et al, Successful Endovascular Management of Massive Pansinus Thrombosis: Case Report and Review of Literature, *Pediatric Neurosurgery* (2016). [DOI: 10.1159/000447411](https://doi.org/10.1159/000447411)

Provided by Sanford Health

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