

Submission
No 171

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I entered my third trimester confident and ready for a positive, calm birth after educating myself on my options and devising a wish list for my birth. However, despite planning on birthing at brand new maternity suites at Campbelltown hospital, I was informed at around 35 weeks that baths could not be used as they were built incorrectly. This made me worried and anxious about how I was going to cope in labour before it even started as I had been relying on being able to use the water for pain relief and birth in the water. My labour started early (37 weeks) and due to meconium in my waters I had to go straight to hospital for monitoring. My early labour was ok but very slow. I was able to use the water in the shower as well as my TENS machine for pain relief. However my birth space was constantly interrupted as multiple people kept coming in to check the heart rate of my baby.

After a few vaginal checks I was informed that baby was under stress and labour was too slow. I now know that this was because she was posteriori, but I wasn't informed of this. If I was I would have actively changed my positioning to help move her into a more suitable position. I was told that the doctors were recommending a drip of syntocinon to speed up my labour. Although I had not wanted pain relief, having this intervention was not something I could handle on my own and requested an epidural. This was completed and the drip started. Again with lots of people entering and exiting the room constantly to check stats. At one point my midwife (on MGP Program) informed me she had to leave as they suspected she had shingles. This added more stress to the labour as I had someone I didn't know and was also worried if anything could happen to me or the baby due to shingles.

The new midwife was lovely but I began having checks by the OB. She was quite rude and during one of my checks (at 9cm) told me "if you aren't fully dilated in the next hour then I'm taking you in for a cesarean". There was no discussion of options, it was an order. During another check, when it was docs covered that baby was posterior, the OB was inside me holding the baby's head and said to the midwife that she was going to try to rotate the baby into an anterior position. She then exclaimed "if i do this it will be my first successful rotation". Not something you want to hear with someone's arm up your vaginally holding onto your baby. This did not make me confident in her ability as an OB or to give me the positive birth experience that I wanted. After the hour I was checked and was only 9.5cm but the midwife convinced the OB to allow me to push. Baby was delivered in only a few pushes and then the room filled with people as she was given an APGAR of 1. I was able to have her on my belly but not on my chest or feeding. The cord was cut quickly, but my midwife did request a delay but it was explained that this wasn't possible due to baby's condition. My baby was then taken away from me and over to the resuscitation table. It was not explained to me what was happening to my baby and what they were worried about. They did get her crying and then she was taken away up to SCN. My partner was able to go up there but was not allowed to do skin to skin contact which we wanted as soon as possible. This was allowed after I came up 2 hours later, and had a first breastfeed.