

Submission
No 200

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My Name is _____, I live in _____ in the _____. I am 34 years old and I have a 2 year old.

My birth care started at my GP in _____ she told me because of my BMI I wont qualify for any other care program other then gonig through the antenatal ward at _____ Hospital. So I didnt apply for MGP or try for shared care even though these would have been preferable.

I was made to do a GD test when I found out I was pregnant because of my weight... and I was told I was on the cusp of GD so I should just do the diet and then when I am further along we can retest, So I spent the first trimester of my pregnancy extremely sick because I couldn't eat anything, salad and anything green made me feel ill and the GD diet basically ruled out breads/carbs which is what my body craved... I lost a fair bit of weight

When I actually took the proper fasting test, I was told I do not have GD, hallelujah! I also had to take another test further down the track and again, no GD.

I went through the motions every appointment at the hospital, meeting a new doctor, never getting to see a midwife, explaining my story at every appointment, it was tiring and defeating.

I got to my 20 weeks appointment- I was so excited to go into the antenatal clinic and get the results of the in depth scan we had had that week.

I was met with yet another different obstetrician (something I had realised was the norm, you never really see the same person twice). My husband came to the 20 week appointment with me and we were met with a doctor who sat down and asked "So tell me about your diabetes" My reply- "I don't have diabetes", I immediately knew this was not going to be the appointment I had been looking forward to. After a lecture about my weight and discussion of extra testing for GD, I was excited to hear all about my babies measurements and the results of the scan, when the doctor told me, "we should book your induction date in now" ... I burst into tears... I didn't want my birth "managed" I really believed in letting it happen as naturally as possible. Through my tears I explained that to this obstetrician and I was basically scoffed at... the rest of the appointment was a blur of lecture about how unsafe my body was and how they just wanted me to have a "healthy baby". I left feeling so deflated... I cried the whole night, my hubby was so supportive.

The following day I saw an advertisement for a birth documentary that was showing at my local cinema, "birth time", I thought it looked interesting so I bought a ticket for my mum and me.

I had been attending a prenatal yoga class for a few weeks and at the start we did a womens circle where we discussed things happening in our pregnancy that week and thoughts or feelings we were having... that week I broke down in the class, felt it was so unfair, the teacher, who was a local doula also, asked me to chat to her after class if I wanted to.

It was the most refreshing conversation I had had in regards to my pregnancy, she reminded me of my intuition and that if things weren't feeling right there was probably a reason, she reminded me how powerful women are and that I can advocate for myself in those situa tions, I don't need to ask permission. It made me feel so empowered and I decided to throw myself into some research about BMI in pregnancy, induction, and my blood clot gene (heterozygous prothrombin mutation).

I discovered Sara Wickham and Rachel Reed, I started listening to The midwives cauldron podcast and reading a few books and articles/blogs online.

I went to the documentary with my mum and I just cried and cried, mostly happy tears, that all the feelings I had been feeling were shown as a system failure, the doco also showed what we can do about this system failure, one woman- one midwife- which is exactly what I had initially wanted when I got pregnant! I left feeling buzzed but also sad that I had not known about this when I initially got pregnant, I felt it was too late to change my care and I had no idea how to go about that. I felt more confident in being able to advocate for myself, now that I had this new found knowledge under my belt!

and I had signed on to do an antenatal birth class with a local company called "birth classes" we were asked about our pregnancy so far... I couldn't talk about my experience so far without getting choked up. The teachers (two local doulas) could see that I was getting upset, in the break we talked more about my experience and I mentioned that I had seen the doco and how I wish I had a midwife, they gave me the number of a local midwife who was taking on new patients privately.

I was now 30 weeks pregnant; I ended up emailing with [redacted], the midwife, and we set up a meeting. I told her all the reasons I was high risk and had been risked out of having the birth I originally wanted (midwife that I could get to know and I wanted to use the birth pool but I had been told I couldn't at the hospital because of my BMI). [redacted] agreed with me that I was a healthy person, BMI doesn't actually have an effect on pregnancy outcomes and she was happy to take me on as a patient and I could have the water birth of my dreams! To say I was happy was an understatement.

My baby was born naturally at home, with my private midwife in attendance, happy and healthy, I had no tears, no issues, my body did what it needed to do. I truly think that if I had stayed in the hospital system this wouldn't have been the case.

I am now hoping to get pregnant again and I am SCARED because I don't think I can afford my private midwife again and I am terrified about the treatment I will receive at the hospital.

If the evidence for one woman, one midwife is so clear, why does this exclude "high risk" people? It seems silly to me.