

Submission
No 277

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

The birth of my daughter occurred on the 28/6/2023.

At the start of my pregnancy, this being my first, all GP's at my medical centre, _____, did not know what to do or where to direct me to begin my journey of pregnancy.

I took 2 blood tests, 2 weeks apart, to confirm pregnancy, and then I was directed for an ultrasound. After the ultrasound took place, I was advised to go back to my doctors. And once again, they did not know what to do. I was asked how I was feeling and given another referral for my 12 week ultrasound and given the option for the harmony/NIPT test.

I opted for the NIPT test, even though it left my out of pocket \$480.

I had to complete this test twice, as the first was contaminated, and the results took more than 3 weeks to arrive which was stressful.

Thankfully, no issues had arisen in either ultrasound or the NIPT test.

I was then awaiting a call from the hospital to meet with a midwife, as my GP advised they were contacted. This did not occur and I reached out via phone call at my 16 week mark. I was not seen by a midwife/the hospital I chose _____ until I was 20 weeks, which is a very long wait, especially for a first time mum who doesn't know what to do or what to expect.

During my first midwife appointment, I requested to be part of the MGP program as I wanted the 1on1 and continuity of care. I was extremely lucky in getting into the MGP program so late in my pregnancy.

My husband and I built a great rapport with our midwife and I believe this was a major factor in my smooth pregnancy, as we did not need to explain ourselves during each midwife visit, have information related unnecessarily and had a calm environment throughout. The MGP program should be more readily available for women.

For my 20 week ultrasound scan, I had to find another imaging centre that bulk billed for this particular scan, as a lot of the places do not bulk bill for the 20 week scan.

I presented to _____ hospital at 33 weeks for reduced movement and I was made to wait an hour to be seen due to staff shortages, even with giving the hospital an hours notice when I was on my way in.

I again presented with reduced movement at 39+6 and was given extra checks this time, including an ultrasound and a blood test to check for kleihauer. It is very lucky this blood test was given, as we found out a few hours this test was positive, which is a rare result, and could have ended up with a placental abruption.

The hospital acted on this very quickly, and I was induced via balloon and syntocin that night, only a few hours after the testing had occurred.

I was given my own room overnight whilst I had the balloon in due to the procedure and my husband was able to stay with me in the room.

For my birth, the amenities were good, however a few things in the room were broken, a hand rail was loose which I began to lean on during a contraction, and the shower heads, which I used the shower for relief, were both broken in that they could not be put on their holders.

During birth, my space was respected by other employees in the hospital and my midwife was able to be us throughout the entire process .

Once I had given birth, due to hospital processes and protocols, we were being ushered out what felt like quite quickly.

As my physical health status after birth was quite good, I was advised to go home. This was only 4 hours after birth. I was also advised that if I stayed, it would be a room with other people, other babies, and my husband could not stay.

This was very different to when I had the balloon in just the night before, even though birth is extremely strenuous, stressful and tiring. And I would need my husband now more than ever. And bring first time parents, we were being sent home with little to no direction on the "what now" once home with a newborn baby.

We received a lot of focus on the giving birth side of parenthood, but not so much direction on the what to expect on your first night alone at home with a newborn baby for the first time.

A different midwife then came to visit for an extremely short time each day for 5 days. I didn't like the fact it was someone different each day as I had to repeat myself and answer the same questions everyday, instead of someone coming, knowing me and how I was and how our baby was the day prior.