

Submission
No 389

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 14 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

During my pregnancy, I had a routine appointment with a midwife, I was asked to do the GBS test. When I asked what my options were and if I had to do it, the midwife informed me that if I didn't do the test, I would be considered positive case, and would: be forced to take antibiotics as a precaution during birth. I said that I would like the week to think about it and do it at the following appointment. I had a different midwife at that appointment, and I said that I needed to do the GBS test. That midwife came out and said it's optional, you don't have to do it if you don't want to. Puzzled, i asked her some further questions and she clarified that none of what the previous midwife said was correct.

I attended the [REDACTED] Hospital [REDACTED] at 38 weeks with decreased fetal movement, there was a suggestion that I may be developing preeclampsia because I had high blood pressure. They suggested I come in the following day for an induction, but there was very little conversation around why, exactly what was happening to me and baby as a result of the high blood pressure and the pros and cons of proceeding. There needed to be more of a discussion, a woman should feel informed about such a huge thing that is about to take place.

I was given a cervical check with no explanation as to what was about to happen. It was scary and painful, i left feeling violated.

A few hours after the birth of our son my husband was told he had to leave, and that he was not allowed to come with me and our baby, who had just been born, into the recovery antenatal unit. I was left by myself and our first born, torn and tired, trying to wrap my head around everything on my own. They said he had to leave because they were about to put me in the shower to clean myself after the birth. My husband could have stayed with our baby, or helped me shower instead of being showered by a stranger at 5 o'clock in the morning after an 11 hour labor and an hour of pushing. The midwives told us he couldn't stay the night in the antenatal unit. It was horrible, i felt so alone and scared, and unsupported. I couldn't get out of the bed without help, i couldn't get to my baby in the bassinet without help, i couldn't move without help. I needed him there. It was our first baby and i had no idea what was happening or what to do. We later found out that some midwives allow some partners to stay, it just depends on who is working that shift.

I had a catheter and bag attached for 2 days, at one point it became excruciating and we called for midwives to come and help and they took several hours. When they eventually came back to help me, we discovered it had come undone and needed to be reinserted. They also never came back to empty the bag and when my husband did it for me the midwives got angry at him.