

Submission
No 308

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My name is _____ I live in _____, Sydney. I'm 39 years old and I have a three year old daughter and a 11 weeks newborn baby girl.

I had my first birth at _____ during covid on 16 June 2020 and my second baby on 27 May 2023 at _____

As a second time mum, through the private hospital system, I feel it's not easy to find midwife access unless recommended by your GP. I chose private hospital for a better stay at the hospital and wanted one doctor as the primary carer.

As my first birth was via private OB at private hospital, I received great care through the midwives but feel there are areas to improve for postpartum once you get home.

I had an induction via syntocinon as my water broke but I had no natural contractions for 6 hours after while being GBS positive. As I was induced, I was told to lie on the bed for constant monitoring even though I asked to be mobile/upright and not use the Swiss ball which was disappointing as I wasn't able to do what physically felt most comfortable to help with the contractions which felt quite strong as they were administered via the IV drip. With the pain, I requested an epidural at around 4pm and started pushing around 7.30pm. My baby was in distress shortly during the pushing stage so the midwives called my OB who advised to use the vacuum with episiotomy to quickly deliver my baby girl. I requested delayed cord clamping and breastfed by baby from skin to skin. I had stitches for a 2nd degree tear in the delivery suite by my OB. Fortunately I had researched birth and delivery online and with my OB's midwife prior to get better understanding of the birthing process as the midwives on duty don't have the time to explain the pro and cons of each step/thing they do so for some people it might be unaware of what and why they do certain things as your experience is mostly dependent on the midwives on duty for the majority of the time.

For the 2nd birth, I was able to birth naturally only using the tens machine once I had contractions at home. When at the hospital around 6cm I was able to use my breathe & tens machine by staying upright and leaned on the bed on my knees. This helped me manage the pain and felt more comfortable with support from OB and midwives. Finally though as my baby's head was abit big and was in abit of distress plus I was getting tired, OB used the vacuum to assist baby out. She had a 36cm head and 4kgs which was a surprise for my smaller frame. I had a 3rd degree tear that OB sutured while in the delivery suite with local anaesthetic. Baby was very healthy and I had a good breastfeeding and post birth care.

Although I didn't have a traumatic birth I feel more education and support around birth, breastfeeding and postpartum will help first time mothers especially once they arrive home. For the first birth, different midwives had different opinions and techniques on how to breastfeed and I was in quite a lot of pain especially sitting on a chair with a 2nd degree tear/stitches.

If we were encouraged to give birth the most physiologically naturally, it could help with the least amount of tearing and may also prevent pelvic floor damage and recovery for the mother long term.

More support on postpartum care needed to support mum with pelvic health checks as one check up at 6 weeks postpartum with the OB or GP only helps with external physical symptoms but pelvic floor requires internal assessment and specialised exercises to heal prolapses and recovery. Although I appreciate the physio visit at the hospital during my stay, I spent hundreds of dollars with pelvic floor Women's health physio to heal my prolapse after the 2nd tear for my first birth and 3rd degree tear with my 2nd daughter. Hospital also provided some postpartum care information.