

Submission  
No 499

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am now 32 and have a four year old son. I live in the \_\_\_\_\_ area. I had my son in 2019. My husband and I had planned the pregnancy, and we were so very excited. During my first appointment with the maternity nurses at \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital, I was advised they would diagnose me with gestational diabetes, as my fasting BGL was 5.3. For context, the blood test was taken by my doctor at 7 weeks because I had been throwing up relentlessly for 3 days straight and hadn't even been able to hold water down for 14 hours beforehand. My BGL was 0.2 over what it should have been. I asked to have it re-tested, explaining that the fasting time was incorrect and that this can have an affect on the reading (my grandmother has diabetes, and I studied pathology), but they refused.

I was referred to a dietitian, given strict dietary requirements, needed to have multiple ultrasounds to check my baby's growth to make sure he wasn't too big (most of which I had to pay for out of pocket), and had to test my blood sugar four times a day. I was constantly hungry, and by the end of my pregnancy I weighed less than what I did prior. Throughout my pregnancy I was managing my BGLs by diet, and always kept within the parameters, save for a couple of times where I was slightly over, never above 9.1. Even though I felt I was managing fine this way, every appointment I had with either the dietitian or the maternity nurses, I was pushed to take insulin. I refused every time, as I didn't think it was necessary. Every person I knew who agreed to take the insulin became dependant on it.

I also consulted several nurses, my husband is a nurse and even asked for guidance from his coworkers, none of whom saw my readings or diet as an issue. Near the end of my pregnancy, they eventually allowed me to have the HBA1C blood test, which confirmed what I had been saying, that I was fine. They then booked me in for an induction at 40+3, as I had been diagnosed with GD and they said we needed to get the baby out as soon as possible, as I had been constantly told from the beginning that I was putting him in danger. I arrived the day before, was checked that night and was told I was having strong contractions (which I couldn't feel) and was 5cm dilated. I felt fine, no discomfort. I asked if I would be allowed to have breakfast before being induced, and they said yes. I was woken at 6am the next day and moved to the birthing suite. I asked if I could call my husband as I wanted him to be there before we did anything. I was also asking if I could have some food, as I was expecting not to eat for at least a few hours. They said no, so when my husband arrived I told him to ask them. Then they brought me a ham and cheese sandwich and broke my water.

I was 8cm dilated. As there was meconium in the water, they had to attach a monitor to my baby's head. I had very limited range of movement and was constantly followed around by a beeping machine. The synthetic oxytocin made the contractions extremely painful, whereas I couldn't feel them before. The nurses kept discussing my baby's fluctuating heart rate, which made me stressed. With the room full of people I didn't know talking about me rather than to me, the machine noises constantly going, and the stress of the whole situation, and being checked myself what seemed like every 15 minutes, I closed up to 4cm. I was approached by the surgeon after approximately 3 hours in labour, saying that we had to have a c-section, and I had to sign the consent paperwork. I did, because I was worried about my baby. The whole process seemed to go fairly quickly from there, and suddenly I had my baby. He was beautiful. In recovery I suffered a post-partum haemorrhage.

It's mostly a blur until I eventually make it back to the maternity ward where my husband and baby were waiting for me. I was told the nurses would watch my baby while I slept for the first night. I couldn't sleep, every baby cry woke me up. The next day I began to try to breastfeed my baby - and was not doing well. I wasn't producing, and I knew it. Every nurse I asked told me the same thing - just keep trying, and pump in between feeds. I still had two cannulas in, one in my arm and one in the back of my hand, "just in case". So, I attempted to feed every two hours, pumped every hour in between (and got nothing), and barely slept 15 minutes at a time. Every chance I got, I told the nurses I was having trouble, and that I needed formula for my baby, so he could have something.

On day three, at about 8pm, I had a nurse who saw me, heard what I said, checked my baby's cry, and finally believed me. She got me formula, and my baby actually slept because he wasn't hungry. Of everything that I felt, I thank her every day, and I don't even remember her name, but I felt like she was the first person in my whole experience who actually listened to me. In between all this, my baby suffered a hematoma on his head from where I closed up on him during birth, and had to endure having his BGL tested for three days after. Eventually on day four we were allowed to go home. Before everything that happened, our plan was to have at least two children, but everytime I think back to this, I get scared. I want to be able to be there for my son, and it might be irrational, but I fear the same thing happening again, if not worse.