

Submission  
No 598

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I contacted Covid when I was 38 weeks pregnant. I'd not been leaving the house except to get tested every 72 hours, as per my hospital's policy. I waited for hours each time, as there was no special queue for pregnant people or other people (I think this was brought in soon after, though)

I'm 99% sure I got Covid when I stood in line to get tested (in January, in Sydney, it was so hot)

I was told by my hospital that if I was still testing positive when I went into labour I would have to wear a mask, my husband wouldn't be allowed in the hospital, and my doctors and nurses would all be wearing full protective suits. As a first time mum, this was beyond terrifying. I couldn't do this alone.

I reached out to a few midwives to see if it was too late to have a home birth. At 38 weeks, of course it was.

Luckily my daughter was comfy in my belly and didn't come until almost 42 weeks.

I had my first contraction at 10pm on Sunday night, she was born at 6:21pm on Tuesday. I'm that time I didn't sleep, I couldn't sleep through the contractions.

They gave me morphine and other pain medication but nothing could help me sleep through it.

I can't remember a lot of my labour, but I remember my husband sitting in the shower with me, in this birthing suite that felt so sterile and not at all what I had in my mind. He was blown away seeing how much pain I was in when the contractions came and then couldn't believe when I'd be dancing and saying "I love this song!" when the contraction passed.

It wasn't how I'd planned, I forgot to pack my salt lamp and my incense and my diffuser. I remember one young nurse said she could maybe find some clary sage oil to use in the diffuser they had. I was so grateful I cried. It felt like that one little moment was the only time anyone tried to make this experience anything like I'd hoped for.

It got to a point where I just wasn't dilating, so I was induced.

I really didn't want to have an epidural. But I got to the point I was so exhausted, I couldn't not. So I agreed. The anaesthetist accidentally put it in the wrong spot, so I had to have another one.

My baby girl was already coming by the time it kicked in.

I was trying so hard to push when my Dr told me to, to breathe when he told me to, I tried not to panic from the pain, but it was so hard.

I was so emotionally and physically exhausted, I'd been awake for 44 hours. My baby was exhausted, too.

I remember saying to my dr "I can't do this, she has to live inside me" half laughing, half crying. He said he needed one more, really big, push, otherwise he'd have to do an emergency c section.

I didn't know at the time, but my dr told my husband they were worried about our daughters breathing and I needed to get her out, asap.

I was running completely on empty at this point, but somehow, with the help of forceps, I pushed a giant push, and her head was out!

My dr said, "reach down, you're going to pull her out"

I was so excited, I reached down and felt her head and the next thing I knew I was grabbing her under her arms and pulling her onto my chest.

I felt like a warrior in that moment.

But I couldn't help instantly feeling disappointed that this wasn't the calm, natural birth I'd hoped for.

My birthing crystals were discarded, my birth affirmation cards were no where to be found.

But I had my baby.

She wasn't breathing very well, so no sooner had I pulled her tiny body up to my chest, she was taken away.

They helped her get breathing properly and gave her back to me.

I had my baby, she was healthy and beautiful and I was okay.

I felt sad, for not having the birth I'd dreamt of, but then I instantly felt guilty for feeling like that.

I had a beautiful, healthy baby, how dare I feel a sadness or disappointment?

But I did, and I still do.

I've never written this down before, I've never verbalised to anyone, not even my husband, that I feel like this.

Thank you for giving women this opportunity to share their stories.

I know so many women have it far, far worse off, but I'm learning to grant myself the space to feel the way I do, everyone's feelings and stories are worthy.

Just because someone has a worse story than yours, doesn't mean yours isn't worthy.