

Submission
No 607

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

October 2009 was when I became a mother for the first time. I was a younger mum. 22 years young. Throughout my visits I was advised my baby was posterior but I was still okay to birth naturally.

My waters had broken at 7am and had called my midwife, at 9am I went in for a check up which detected I was having contractions but I wasn't feeling them at the time. I was advised to go home and monitor them. Fast forward to 8pm that evening the contractions were intensifying another call to my nominated midwife with her telling me to try and hold in there at home. I couldn't handle the pain so to the hospital we went. [REDACTED] hospital in 2009 was set up for natural births only, and all these years later is still set up the same way. I was given gas which slowed everything down. I was vomiting from this and the pain was getting worse. After hours of being at [REDACTED] and in a lot of pain I was given morphine and transferred to [REDACTED] hospital.

You can imagine how scary it was first baby no one really talking to you just judging eyes. I was monitored to see how bub was progressing. The pain was so bad I was then given an epidural which helped and allowed me to sleep and re gain some energy. The Doctor arrived and did a check and decided to let the epidural wear off to see if bub would turn on her own. This was a horrible time. They decided to prep me for theater for a C-section. I was petrified my mum wasn't allowed to continue to support me as my partner was there. When I'm theater they had seen bub had turned on her last minute. Instead of completing the C-section they made me go natural. They used forceps on her which gave me 3rd degree tears front and back. As if birthing wasn't bad enough the communication went completely wrong. They took my baby away and placed me in recovery in a room that felt cold and isolated. I missed out on the important bonding stages. Again when they noticed I was a 'natural' birth they took me to the ward. Again I was sent to one room and my baby and family to another.

Continuing on now recovering in [REDACTED] hospital I was having it pushed down my throat that I needed to breast feed. My daughter had been through a few rounds while being born and let's not forget about the impact that I now know forceps can have on a baby's jaw. I was made to sit up and express for what felt like hours on end. I had one midwife/nurse connect a tube to my finger to feed my daughter because they didn't want her getting used to a bottle, along with another telling me I should've thought about the late nights before getting pregnant! As if I hadn't been through enough judgment this nurse really made me feel worthless. Then my guardian angel arrived. I asked in a very deflated voice for a tube to feed my precious little girl. The nurse looked puzzled and asked me why. I explained what had happened the night before which led to one simple question would you like to breast feed or bottle feed. She told me she could make a formula bottle for me if that's how I would like to go. The smile on my face re appeared. We then had a chat about what was said by another nurse/midwife and she encouraged me to make a complaint which we spoke with the head num on the day.

Almost 14 years later and the trauma still sits with me! It took me ten years before I extended my family and even then the trauma was still there.

With my second born I was told the whole way natural would be okay through [REDACTED] hospital. They again didn't explain the risks of a natural birth after third degree tears. It was just through a check up needed at [REDACTED] hospital and me questioning how a C-section worked that I was booked with a Doctor to discuss. The doctor explained if I wanted to try natural he would support that but through experience there was a big chance of tearing again and a chance I wouldn't recover like I did last time.

My third and final pregnancy I went directly to [REDACTED] hospital and voiced everything I wanted this time. I made sure everybody knew what I wanted for my baby and I. This was the best birthing experience out of the three. The only flaw was that even though I said from day one this pregnancy was a C-section they left it till last minute to book me in which created a little stress with the unknown

Our midwife's, nurses and Doctors do a great job with what they have. To better support families we need to have open minds and not make new mums no matter the age feel like rubbish through how our babies are fed. These are the most important developmental stages and the trauma that is placed on the mother also carries over to the baby.

Let's be okay with birthing choices and give all the information not just the information that one person may feel is enough.