

Submission  
No 564

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I gave birth to my first child at [REDACTED] Public Hospital in September 2022. I originally applied for the Midwifery Group Practice but was unable to secure a spot; it seems like you need to register before you even conceive to make it into the program. Thus I decided to do shared care with my GP.

At 37 weeks pregnant, my GP had some concerns that my stomach was measuring slightly smaller than she would expect and sent me for an ultrasound. The scan determined that my baby had dropped to the 46th percentile (from the 64th percentile at 34 weeks), but they had no reason to believe that there were any major concerns. At my 38 weeks appointment at the Antenatal Clinic at [REDACTED] Hospital, the results of the scan were shared with the doctor, but again, no major concerns were raised.

At my 40 weeks antenatal appointment at the hospital, the doctor that I saw asked how I felt about an induction. I told the doctor that I had no reason to believe that an induction was necessary at that stage as no concerns had been raised at my previous antenatal appointments. However, following this discussion, the head doctor came in to see me and asked to see my previous scan results. He said he was very concerned that my baby's percentile appeared to have plateaued between the 34 weeks and 37 weeks ultrasound and said he wanted me to immediately get bloods taken, get another ultrasound and also CTG monitoring. I was confused why there seemed to be such a concern over the ultrasound findings as there had been no issues raised at my previous appointment at 38 weeks.

Whilst CTG monitoring suggested my baby was doing fine, the results of the ultrasound showed that my baby's abdomen circumference was measuring quite small. I was told that my baby was very tiny and if I didn't have an induction that night my baby might die. This message was delivered in a very abrupt manner and it was incredibly stressful to go from thinking that everything was fine in my pregnancy to feeling like if I didn't have an induction my baby might die. I made the very tough decision to go home that night, as I was not mentally prepared to have my baby after the stressful afternoon I endured, and returned the following day to start the induction process.

After the balloon induction failed to bring on contractions my waters were broken the following day. I made it to 6-7cm dilated before the midwives informed me that they were struggling to pick up my baby's heartbeat and as he was so small they felt that I needed to have an emergency c-section. My baby was born via c-section at a healthy 3.43kg. It certainly made me question whether the stress and pressure I felt to start the induction process was warranted when he came out perfectly healthy and an average weight.

Post delivery the nurses were amazing but were very understaffed. On my second night in hospital after giving birth I was in immense pain and couldn't get my son to stop crying. I was also crying as I didn't know what to do. I buzzed for a nurse several times and eventually had to turn my alarm off as no one came.

However, the most stressful part of my birth story actually occurred once I was discharged from the hospital. I was told that I lived too far away for a midwife to visit but that one would be arranged to visit me from another hospital. After [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Hospitals both declined to send a midwife out to see me I was told that I would just have to make an appointment with my GP and a Child Family Health nurse. As a first time mum recovering from an emergency c-section I was distraught. I was struggling to breastfeed, I was worried about my son's umbilical cord stump and we weren't even sure how/when to bathe our son as we were never shown. To make matters worse, we were unable to get into a Child Family Health Nurse until my son was 3.5 weeks old so I was constantly worrying about whether we were doing things properly and whether my son was gaining weight.

To move forward with positive change I would love to see that more postpartum support could be made available, particularly to first time mums. I also think it is very important that mums, and particularly new mums, don't feel as though they are being pressured and coerced into having interventions/inductions. My story would have been a lot less traumatic if I wasn't given the ultimatum that my baby would die if I didn't have an induction.