

Submission
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INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

I always had fear and anxiety attached to how my birth would be. The pain scared me the most, and boy did it live up to my fears.

Everyone's story will be different. As part of my healing process, I am sharing mine.

There was always a narrative that intervention would take place if baby did not arrive before 40 weeks, due to IVF and gestational diabetes.

So from week 36-37 I did absolutely everything under the sun to get things moving. I'm talking, everything multiple times. Sex, dates, raspberry leaf tea, acupuncture, labour massage, spicy food, stretch and sweeps, long walks, clary sage, nipple stimulation, harvesting colostrum, bouncing balls etc.

But as my 40 weeks approached, it was evident this baby was not moving.

So induction was booked in at 40w 2d.

My midwife inserted cervidril around 10am on a Tuesday, and my hubby and I spent the day in hospital, watched Netflix, went for a walk and grabbed lunch.

Cervidril meant I needed to stay overnight for monitoring, but unfortunately hubby had to leave by 9pm.

Nothing really happened during the day, so I tried to sleep and rest.

At 10.30pm an OB came in to talk next steps. Which was to check my dilation and insert the ballon.

Now pre induction, I did a LOT of googling about the ballon, and worked myself up so much, about how the pain would be. Every examination down there hurts for me, so I knew this would be painful. But boy was it PAINFUL.

The OB and two midwife's ushered me into a more clinical room and handed me the gas.

My first time ever using it, so we did a few practice runs before she got started.

Then they said keep sucking, and the OB went for it. What felt like 20mins of hardcore pain, I sucked that gas like nothing else. I felt everything, but it was like I couldn't move or talk. It was horrible. I hated every moment.

Once she was done, she said I was 3.5cm dilated, but my cervix was very far back, so she had to do lots of maneuvering to get it it.

From here, the midwives walked me back to me room. I felt super light headed and nauseous. They put the tens machine on me and I tried to rest.

I tossed and turned all night, with mild period cramping, and used the tens machine booster often.

Then at 5.30am Wednesday the OB came back in.

Now throughout my pregnancy my midwife, has always said, some medical professionals will do whatever suits them, and not necessarily what's right for you. So you have a right to say no at anytime.

This was one of those times.

The OB sat on the end of my bed, looked at me and said, 'delivery room is empty, so I'm going to break your waters, then you can head down to the ward.'

I was scared, hubby and midwife weren't there, and this was not our birth plan.

I called hubby, and he said to tell her no, but she continued to stare at me, pointing at her watch and said 'come on, nothing will happen for a while, and I've got other ladies to do, so let's go'.

After a few more stares and egg on from the OB, I caved, she broke my waters, then told me to go have a shower. I stood up, as fluid and blood leaked out, and made my way to the bathroom. I felt so alone and vulnerable. I'd never given birth before, and I really needed my hubby and midwife.

Hubby and midwife came as quickly as possible to comfort me, I was exhausted and starting to feel a lot of pain.

As I tested positive for group B strep, a OB then came in to insert a cannula in my hand to administer antibiotics during labour. He had to do it twice, as the first point wasn't successful - it was so painful. They then gave me some panadene forte, and we made our way to the delivery ward.

We entered the delivery suite, and almost instantly, I started to get painful contractions. With every one that came, I spewed. I was so nauseous and also hungry. Over a couple of hours, I threw up four times, and asked my midwife if I was in active labour.

To my horror, she said no, and she also said she hadn't even started the oxytocin drop yet.

It was at this point, I knew I needed an epidural asap!

I told them both to get it sorted as I could no longer handle the pain.

I waited about 30mins for the anesthetist to come and within the next 20mins it was in.

For the next 6-8hours I tossed and turned trying to get some sleep, however I had developed an infection and my temperature was high. My body was as uncontrollably shaking like I was freezing, but I was so hot, so hubby had to fan me and put a cold towel on my head.

They pumped me with antibiotics and fluids, and baby's heart rate was averaging high.

This was not ideal.

They did a dilation check, and I was now 7cm. My temperature was not going down, neither the was baby's heart rate, so it was time for them to reassess.

At this point, I could also feel a lot of pressure and pain in my lower abdomen and bum. My worst fear, was that the epi had stopped working.

They did some ice checks on my body, and it turns out the epi was not working on one side of my body, faaaarrrr out!!!

Things started to get painful!

A senior OB then came in and advised that they would give me about 20mins to push, and if baby wasn't out, she would need to use the vacuum or forceps.

My midwife did another check, and I was now fully dilated. It was go time.

I pushed for what felt like hours, but must of been 15mins. Comb in one hand, and epi only working on one side.

It was too much, I was in so much pain. The midwife said she saw baby's head with my push, but as time had passed it was now time for OB to intervene.

She gave me a pep talk which was very much, about me needing to push like I've never pushed before, for the safety of my baby and me.

I felt her stick a needle in, and she then performed a episiotomy.

After the second round of contractions and pushing, she yelled stop.

And the ring of fire 🔥 was in prime force.

I was bashing the comb into my head, breathing like nothing else, then she said push, then bam, a rush and release came and baby was out and on my chest.

Baby was born at 12.25am on a Thursday (Induction started 10am on the Tuesday)

At this point, I felt a wave leave my body. Someone turned to me and said, 'do you want to know what you had?'

They gave me my glasses back (so I could see) and they said 'it's a BOY'

I burst out laughing, as the whole pregnancy I was convinced baby was a girl.

As baby laid on my chest, I could feel the OB sewing me up. She was surprised I could feel her.

She then said, my placenta is not birthing itself yet, and she would give it up to an hour, otherwise she would need to intervene.

She pushed down on my belly multiple times throughout the hour, and nothing.

She explained the complications and advised I needed to head into theatre straight away.

Baby was then handed to hubby and I was wheeled away.

I asked about pain relief and they advised more epi, but due to the fact I could feel things, they recommended I go under.

I was not willing to feel anymore pain, so I went under and woke up later in recovery. The OB came to talk to me about how it went, and said some stitch's tore when the placenta came out, so lucky I was knocked out!

Soon after, I was wheeled to my room, then hubby, midwife and joined me.

What an exhausting 3 days.

I am so grateful and blessed that and I are safe and healthy. But the trauma I experienced with labor will be around for a while, and I need some time to heal my mind and body.

From here it was straight into starting my painful breast feeding journey.

This was my experience, one I need to share to help me heal. Talking about it to friends and writing it down has started to help me process those few days.

The body is truly amazing, now it's time to heal my mind.