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Dear Home Birth Folks,

It's been a long time since your helpful reply last October. At that time I thought it possible to organize a home birth with a midwife & my doctor. All was going well until they had to see the medical supervisor. Suddenly, it was no way that I could have a home birth so the doc very patronizingly told me how it would be good ~~that~~ if I used the new Home Birth Unit at the hospital (if it was finished by then that is!).

I did contemplate using the unit; it comprises of two adjoining rooms, one with a ^{single} bed & one with a couch & a couple of chairs plus carpet. Both rooms have a couple of walls with floral paper + also floral drapes (subdued floral). But then again there is nothing quite like home. When the midwife apologetically backed out she gave me the Ph number of Ingrid Johnson. Ingrid & her husband wrote the "Paper Midwife". Although my husband had said that if we couldn't get a home delivery ~~unless~~ on 'orthodox' lines, we would have to go to hospital, I was feeling desperate so rang her. I was instantly impressed & my husband agreed to see her & was also instantly impressed. She offered to come & be present for the labour so we would have a knowledgeable person present.

Well Holly was born on the 9th of Jan after 17hrs labour. Ingrid was absolutely fantastic. I had meconium in

the waters so she was monitoring the heartbeat + telling me to try + get baby out as quick as possible. She suctioned her out as soon as the head was born + there was another baby announcing her arrival. By that stage I was quite exhausted + had no thought whatsoever about 3rd stage, all I wanted to do was cuddle my baby + drift off to sleep. Ingrid however kept massaging my womb + getting baby to suckle. Finally, nearly 2hrs later we had the afterbirth so everyone had a cup of tea + I let our eyelids close (1.30am or so).

I am so very grateful that we contacted Ingrid as I really treasure having had Holly at home. My mother was there, holding my hand, and Peter, my husband, had the amazing experience of catching baby as she came out.

Although they told me I hadn't torn, I was sure I had + found at Sam that I was in extreme agony trying to pee. I had torn up toward my clitoris. Talk about painful! Off to the hospital to get stitched up. Also got interrogated but was so high I didn't care. My doctor wasn't too bad as I think he $\frac{1}{2}$ expected it anyway. All the things he said to shame me as being irresponsible I had an answer for, as Ingrid obviously knew what she was about.

The midwife I was originally going to have is apparently going to work in the New Plymouth area once a Flying Squad is established - that is underway at the moment. She applied to be registered, but only in the New Plymouth area.

I have written and suggested that if she didn't restrict her area she could do postnatal visits for those wishing to go home 6hrs or so after labour. A lot of people are interested in such a service, as home birth is a bit too scary an idea. Text wouldn't put any responsibility on her.

One thing that struck me was that all throughout my pregnancy I was told that such and such was going to happen, rather than being asked how I would like things. It was only because I informed myself that I discovered the routine hormone injections plus the Vit K injections. When I questioned my doctor he seemed annoyed that I knew + even more annoyed when I said I didn't want them. They mentioned them in the antenatal classes + I tried to bring out a discussion but got told the injections were just a hormone, nothing to worry about. End of discussion. Also the antenatal classes said they thought all those having their first baby should accept pain relief. One friend complained that her doctor considered she needed pain relief when she didn't want it, and imposed it on her.

Well anyway my experience has really reinforced my views on home birth and I am going to continue the battle up here. Also am going to try to get a lot more women aware that they can have a lot of control over their own bodies + birthing experiences.

Kind regards

Geraldine Thomas

