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20073-27-051

30 Sutton Cres.
Papakura,
6 August 85.

The Secretary, I must recommend the psychoprophylaxis classes taken by Sue Haddow at Maraitai. I found them a most marvellous support throughout the birth of my first child. She also has a night to teach the husbands how to support & help their wives during labour if they wished to participate. I must also express to any husband, the great value for a woman to have her partner help her with the breathing exercises during labour, & also during the pushing stage, as one can become decidedly overwhelmed with the intensity of physical sensations & be in need of a firm reminder of how to cope with pushing, & not pushing when need be, with appropriate breathing. The partner then becomes totally involved with the birth process.

I was having my first child at 34, & had found a doctor for a home birth who was willing, but unfortunately baby arrived $4\frac{1}{2}$ wks early, so we had to go to Middlemore hospital.

My waters broke at 10.45 pm in a torrent, contractions started immediately, between 3 & 4 minutes apart, but very easy to cope with, using the breathing techniques taught by Sue. We arrived at hospital at 1.00 am

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and on being checked by the duty doctor was found to be 4cm dilated. The doctor then informed me I would need an ipesitany and a sedative, as the baby being early would probably suffer 'brain damage' if I didn't. We firmly refused to be scared into this, and things got a bit heated, with the doctor insisting. This upset me a great deal, as I wanted a drug & intervention free birth & was feeling extremely vulnerable. My husband backed me up, and fortunately the midwife intervened & insisted I did not have to have either if I chose not to. The staff exited, obviously to have words together. The head midwife returned & took us to one of the rooms where I voiced my dislike at the doctors attitude, & the prospect of having him deliver the baby. She then asked if I would like her to deliver it instead. I very happily agreed, so we were left together as labour progressed. By 3.15 am the pushing urge began, we rang the bell & the midwife returned & checked me, to find I was fully dilated, so was taken to the delivery room. Thirty minutes later a baby boy was born with the minimum of fuss, once again thanks to Sue's classes & the information she gave on the different stages of labour & what to expect, & how to cope with pushing

3/ Baby Adrian was born, 6lbs, drug free & trauma free, & suffered no brain damage and opened his eyes immediately after birth & looked around most unperturbed.

A home birth would have been much nicer, but, by being informed, by reading & through talks at the home birth meetings, I managed to have an active & positive birth experience anyway.

I also religiously took raspberry leaf tea & tablets through my pregnancy as recommended, & certainly I had a very straight forward & short labour despite negative responses about my age from various doctors.

Sincerely
Anitra Thomas.