

Parent Forum

Be informed to prevent horrific births—your baby’s life is counting on it!

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Abstract

I am one mother speaking for 10 mothers, 100 mothers, and 1000 mothers—all mothers. Especially those who cannot speak up about the horrors of their birth, or maybe don’t know how to. I am sharing my birthing experience for each of my five children: Juliana Maria—age 22, born 1984; Matthew Stephen—age 20, born 1986; Kaitlyn Ann-Marie—age 10, born 1996; Dominic Joseph—age 6, born 2000; and Isabella Angela—almost 4, born 2003. It is my hope that readers of this article will be enlightened and stop the horrors that I relate from happening in other families. Disabled babies and children should not just be “accepted” in our culture. We need to ask questions. Where did this come from? How did this happen? Why did this happen? What can we do to help this child? Who is responsible for these horrors? Who can help us? When did this happen—what hospital, what clinic, etc.

It is totally unacceptable to have a disabled baby when the disability could have been prevented. Modern medical “procedures” are maiming and killing our babies. This needs to stop! While mandatory informed consent is already the law, it seems to be used selectively and without proper full disclosure. Thus, parents need to be more assertive in asking questions and demanding answers! Cerebral Palsy, autism, ADD, ADHD, and other neurological problems should all be disorders of the past.

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Juliana Maria Jenkins

I married for the first time in September, 1983. I was pregnant with Julie in October. I was very young (only 18 years old), but also very excited. This was the first grandchild for my mom and dad. They were not too happy as they felt I was too young and had wanted me to go on to college and use the intelligence they felt I had to do other things first. I had always excelled in school, but of course I knew more than they did and I ran off to meet my knight in shining armor two days before my 18th birthday. Marriage came 3 months later. This was the one of the biggest mistakes of my life.

After finding out I was pregnant, I went down to the pregnancy clinic to get tested. The test was positive. I was shocked, but then called my sister asking her instead to tell our parents. I knew they would be disappointed in me. They were. But they did eventually get over it, and once Julie was born, they were delighted to have her come over and visit.

The Pregnancy

Juliana’s pregnancy was relatively trouble-free until about the 6th month. I thought my water had broken some, so my husband and one of his friends helped take me to the hospital. Once there, the resident doctor on staff kept questioning me over and over about “street drugs” and had I taken any. I insisted, “No,” that I had not. Being very well educated during my teenage years, and sheltered from the issues of drugs and alcohol, I did not even know what a “street drug” was. The doctor took my husband out to the hall and again asked what drugs I was on. He stated none. She told him that she did not believe either of us. We were, of course, very young. Stereotyping young pregnant parents is not a good thing. There are some young people who know how to carefully protect their

unborn child. It seems there are more “adult” parents who harm their children worse, whether it is from not being informed about pregnancy and birth, or child abuse.

Without any informed consent, a catheter was placed up inside my urinary tract. The nurse shoved it up inside me with great force and caused quite a bit of pain and bleeding. Her statement to the doctor, who was watching was, “Wow, look how cloudy her urine is! We will surely find drugs in there. Is there anything you want to tell us young lady?”

Well, needless to say, they found no drugs in my urine. I was just slightly dehydrated.

- 1st Concern: No informed consent to get urine sample
- 2nd Concern: Willfully caused pain
- 3rd Concern: Could have caused infection by improper handling of catheter .
- 4th Concern: Did not treat with patient with respect and courtesy because I was a “young mother.”

Totally inexcusable.

Julie’s due date was July 3, 1984. I was getting impatient and wondering when my baby was going to be born. I finally went into the hospital on July 22nd with a little pain, but not much. I told the doctors I thought I was in labor. I wasn’t. But they decided to keep me and induce me in the morning. Knowing what I know now, I would have refused, but then again you don’t know much at the tender age of 18.

Labor was induced at 9:00 a.m. The IV placement was again, very painful, and the nurse commented that if she thought this pain was bad, just *wait* until the labor pains started. Her comments were not only unacceptable, cruel, and mean, but completely unprofessional. It was just a short time before the labor kicked in—hard—about 11 a.m. I had been given Pitocin. No one had ever explained what this medication was for or how

painful it would make the contractions. Also, no one explained to me that I could have pain medications such as Demerol, morphine, or an epidural—especially with an induced labor. No pain medications were offered to me until I had screamed in sheer terror from the pain for over an hour. I was then given Demerol. The side rails on my childbirth prison bed were pulled up so I could not escape. I had to go to the bathroom, but no nurses came by to help me even though I was crying out for assistance. I finally gathered up all my IV lines, poles, and scooped my tissue paper dress all into one clump into my hand and climbed over the rail. I promptly fell on the floor after tripping on the IV lines. I had to throw up and didn't quite make it in time. So the bathroom floor was a mess. A very bad side effect of the medications that are given in labor to help with the pain will make you vomit.

I was so embarrassed that I did not ask for any help in cleaning up the mess. My husband never offered once to help me with anything, comfort me, or get me something to drink, or be a support person. When a nurse would come in, I would ask for water or something to drink. I was always told no. Why is that?

I also remember a group of doctors coming in to “observe” me in labor. Every time I had a contraction, each doctor would put their plastic glove on and examine me during a contraction. It was very painful and embarrassing. I had not given any explicit permission for them to do that either, unless it was in one of those tiny clauses on the back of page 99 when you sign in. I asked for the doctors to stop doing that to me, but they said they had to because it was part of the residents' training. What about my rights and those of the baby's?

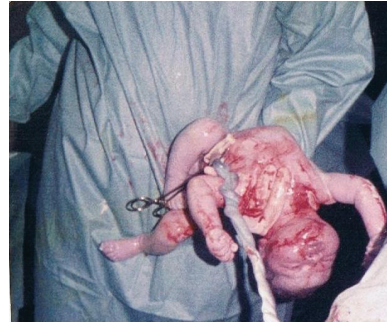
Juliana's labor lasted about 11 hours. Mostly what I remember was the thrashing back and forth in my bed—on my back of course. There was no one to support me. The nurses that did come in, told me to be quiet because I was disturbing other patients.

It was shortly thereafter that I had a very strong urge to push. My husband informed the doctors, but they ignored me. I said fine, I was going to push anyway. Julie's head was on her way out. After my husband found some nurses, they strapped me down in a gurney and crashed me through a bunch of doors into the delivery room. I was put in green drapes with my arms and legs strapped down with Velcro belts. I was not allowed to move anything or attempt to move any body parts outside of the “green zone”.

It was shortly after a couple more contractions and pushes, that an episiotomy was given with *no informed consent*. I had explicitly put in my birth plan no episiotomy, shaving, or internal monitor on my baby's head. All three were done.

Juliana was born rather quickly after that. I saw her being born in the mirror up above the “doctor” delivery table (it should be called that because the table was designed to accommodate the doctor, not the mother). I wanted so badly to hold her. Her umbilical cord was immediately tied off with a pair of scissors. I took my hand out from under the “green zone”, and was yelled at. The nurse smacked my hand and forcefully put it back in its place. I was reprimanded and she held my hand down very hard to the point that she was hurting me. *Such a loving way for mom and baby to bond—isn't it?*

I got to see Julie for just a few minutes. They wheeled my cart out of the delivery room with her on my chest, and then my husband took her from me. That was about 9:00 p.m. on July 23, 1984.



I did not get to see Julie again until almost 4 p.m. the next day. I kept crying and asking for her, but was told no, I needed my sleep. I finally kept complaining long enough that they did give her to me. My room was the “welfare” room, where four of us

mothers shared one room separated by only one curtain, which was fine by me. I just wanted to go home. One nice nurse there did help show me how to get Julie on the right track to breastfeeding. It was very cool to watch milk that God had created for my little girl go into her mouth. I left two days later with a brand new beautiful little girl, but also very shocked at how pregnant moms are treated in the hospital. This was my first experience at the very tender age of 19 years old. Little did I know what my future pregnancy experiences would be like.

Julie was an excellent breast feeder. She loved to nurse. She was a very beautiful and well-behaved child and always a joy to have. She is now 22 years old, will be getting married soon, and loves being the oldest child in the family. She especially enjoys her two little sisters Katie, and Bella, and little brother Dominic.

Matthew Stephen Jenkins

Matthew's pregnancy was much unexpected. I was just getting ready to divorce my first husband and start a new life with Julie and myself in Southern California. I went into the Long Beach, California, Planned Parenthood Center to get some birth control pills. A few minutes later, a counselor came out and said she would have to change the nature of my visit. I asked her what she meant. She told me she could not give me the pills because I was pregnant, I had her show me the pregnancy test. It was positive! Wow. What was I going to do now? I was just starting to do some small time modeling at that time. That would not last long. My photographer promptly offered to give me money to take care of “this problem.” Being only 20 years old, I was confused as to what he meant, but once he clarified his meaning, I told him what he could do with his money. The doctor at Planned Parenthood took me back into her room and looked through a big medical textbook to look for a medication that I had taken the previous month for an



Kelly Moscarello, Age 20

infection that I had. She looked up the name of the drug and told me the name of the drug and that her “book” said it was necessary I have an immediate abortion as my child would most certainly be severely mentally retarded or have “limbs missing.” I started crying and just wanted to go home. As I was leaving, I was warned to get an abortion immediately. I told her no, that I was Catholic and I did not believe in killing my babies. I very distinctly remember the poster that was on the last door that I was walking through. It was a door-length poster that stated “Please remember to take your pill or this could happen to you.” The poster was a bunch of little bunny rabbits who had all reproduced rather rapidly. Ha Ha. I found no humor in that.

I went home and told my husband that child number 2 would be arriving next year in either August or September and that he had better get a job. We had just moved and had no furniture, no money, and no family. I desperately wanted to just go back home to Ohio.

We spent the entire pregnancy in California. Julie went to preschool while I worked. As I got further along in my pregnancy, I quit my job, stayed home, cared for Julie, and anxiously awaited the birth of my second child whom I was sure would be a boy.

My due date was the beginning of September, but the doctor went ahead and induced me on August 21st because he felt I had been pregnant long enough. Again, if I had known what I know now, things would have gone very differently. This time, labor was induced at about 11 a.m. with contractions that started very soon thereafter. An anesthesiologist was on hand to give me an epidural, which I did accept. It did work for a very short time, but only on one-half of my body. So I could still feel all the pain. When the time came to push, I could not push because of the epidural block. The nurse told me that if I did not push harder or more effectively, they would do a C-section. I pushed so hard, that my cervix was bruised and we had to wait a while for the bruising to go down. Finally, it was time to push again. A big episiotomy was performed without any anesthesia. The theory of not using medication for an episiotomy is that there is so much pressure that the mother will not feel it. That is an outright *lie!* Oxygen was placed on my face, my legs were spread very painfully apart, a vacuum suction pump was placed on Matt’s head, and within ten minutes Matthew was born. He was immediately placed on my belly. I do not know how long the doctor waited before he clamped the cord.

Matt was placed in a warmer for about an hour even though I kept asking to hold him. As soon as I held my new baby in my arms, I breastfed him immediately. It was wonderful!

I didn’t breastfeed him long though, as I was put into a wheelchair and moved to my room. The ride was very painful since I had been cut so brutally. Matthew was taken from me as soon as we arrived in my room. The pitocin drip was left in my arm because the doctors were afraid I would bleed too much, so contractions continued every five minutes. This went on for about six hours when I finally demanded they remove the pitocin. With much reluctance, they did. The pain was so great from the episiotomy, that I required a lot of help to get to the bathroom. The wound was excruciatingly painful and combined with having given birth, almost unbearable.

Every time Matthew would nurse, there would be even more pain from the contracting uterus. Is birth supposed to be this painful?

As I was trying to rest, another nurse came in and injected my arm with something. I did not know what it was nor was she going to tell me. She just insisted that I sign a form. After I ignorantly signed it, I asked what it was. She said it was my Rubella shot as I was not immune and I was to make sure I did not get pregnant within the next six months or I would have a retarded child. Another great example of no informed consent.

Matthew was soon taken away for his circumcision. No one ever talked to me about the dangers associated with this optional procedure. I just thought it was something “that was just done.” A few minutes later I heard a little baby scream out a cry that was so piercing that I literally jumped in my bed. I know that cry had come from my son as his foreskin was cut away. The nurse brought him back to his little bed in my room a short time later and he cried so hard he could barely breathe. His penis looked so raw and red. The whole area was oozing. I was afraid to touch him. The first time he urinated, he screamed for over thirty minutes. That was the first time, at the tender age of 21 that I started to wonder about doctors, medicines, and “procedures.” That day was the first one where I was feeling anger and fury at unnecessary “procedures.” All I could do was cuddle and nurse him and hope the pain would go away soon.

We soon left to go home, and I swore I would never let another birth like Julie’s or Matt’s ever happen again. Little did I know I would not have much say...

Katilyn Ann–Marie Moscarello (supposed to be Jacob)

There is ten years between Matt and Katie. This time I was married to my second husband, Mark. We had been married for four years when Katie came into our lives. I found out I was pregnant with Katie in August, 1995. In October, 1995, I was surprised to find out that I was pregnant with twins! But a few weeks later, I started bleeding, and after an ultrasound was performed, learned that one of the twins, which in my heart I believe was another girl, had died. I was devastated.

The rest of the pregnancy progressed rather normally. I planned for her (his) birth more diligently than the previous two. All the ultrasounds had said we were going to have a boy. I was disappointed as I had wanted another daughter. Julie was very disappointed as well as she already had two brothers. This birth was going to be perfect though! Mark and I were not planning on any more children, so this had to be the birth I had always dreamt of. A birth plan was drafted, plans were discussed with my doctors and my husband. All I had to do was wait for the baby. My first wish was to not have to be induced. Her due date was April 25, 1996. That day came and went. I was told on May 2nd that I would be induced if the baby was not born by May 9th. I started to protest, but the doctor did not want to hear it. I reluctantly agreed, mostly because I was tired of being pregnant and wanted my baby in my arms and not in my ever expanding belly.

All the arrangements were made at home for the older children. My husband notified his employer and we were set to check into the hospital on May 9, 1996, against my better judgment. About 6 a.m. on May 7th, however, my water broke.

Exploded is a more accurate word. Uh oh, the baby was coming. My son was on his way.

I called for Julie to bring me a towel. She was a little confused as to why I wanted a towel. I waddled out of bed and went to tell Mark as he was asleep on the couch. There is not enough room in a bed for a married couple when one of them is nine months pregnant. He called his employer and told him we were having a baby today. We were all so very excited. We waited to go to the hospital though as I did not want to be hooked up to all the machines. I wanted this labor to be different. Some laundry was done, the older kids were sent off to school—how hard that must have been for them to go wondering about the baby. We were going to have breakfast at *Denny's*, but the contractions were getting too uncomfortable, so we headed for the hospital around 8 a.m. Every bump in the road got a growl from me. When we arrived, we checked in, and I got settled into my room. Then the medical interventions started. I needed to go to the bathroom. I was not allowed because my water had broken. “Pee in the plastic container,” I was told. “Take off your clothes,” and put on this one size fits all tablecloth. “No, you can’t wear your own underwear. Everything comes off except what we give you.” When the nurse was busy doing her paperwork, I snuck off to the bathroom and locked the door. Then the yelling started, “Get out of the bathroom! You need to get into bed.” I yelled, “No” and to leave me alone. My poor husband was torn between letting me birth as I wanted and “obeying” the medical gods (professionals). I sat down on the toilet and just cried as I knew that this birth was not going well. After I could not bear the pain any longer, I came out of the bathroom. Now I was afraid as well. The nurses yelled at me. An epidural was ordered even though I had not wanted one, but I gave in. Mark was told to leave the room repeatedly as procedure after procedure was performed. It was approximately 9:30 a.m. The epidural did not go in well and I was warned that if I kept moving, I could be paralyzed. Oh, is that all? Where was my husband? Because Katie’s water had broken, I was given amnioinfusion which is where the OB attempts to replace the amniotic fluid by adding more water. It is a very painful procedure. I had made it very clear that an internal fetal monitor was *not* to be screwed into my newborn baby’s head. It was done anyway.

Everything started to go crazy about 10 a.m. I was told I had to have a C-section as the fetal monitor was showing Katie was in distress. Her heart rate was dropping dangerously low, probably due to the fact that I was flat on my back and had an epidural. I still wonder to this day if I was given pitocin even though I was already in labor. Watching the fetal monitor was horrifying for me as the numbers kept going lower and lower. I was yelling at my baby and telling her “No, no, no!” The doctor took Mark out in the hallway and told him we needed to do a C-section or the baby was going to die.

I finally gave in from all the pain (the epidural had worn off), and the fear. My husband was again told to leave. I was prepped for the C-section and rolled down the hallway.

The tears of anger and sadness started. Why couldn’t I give birth right?

Once in the surgery room, I asked for my husband. Where was he? The nurses exposed my swelling abdomen. They commented about how big my belly was. And oh, the stretch

marks were awful. I was covered with Betadine and it was cold. The doctor started to slice into me. I screamed. I could feel the scalpel! What was going on. The doctor and anesthesiologist argued back and forth. He yelled at her to increase the dose. She said no. I had the maximum amount. He kept cutting and I kept screaming. My husband finally came in. My arms were tied down like Jesus on the cross. My neck hurt because I could not move it. It was mobilized in some sort of styrofoam neck brace. I kept trying to push my baby out as I was nine centimeters dilated. I could not feel my legs. Mark was trying to reassure me. He wanted to watch. He was fascinated. I was horrified. All I remember is the intense fear for my child and the horrifying pain as I felt every cut. Finally the baby was born. It was a girl! What should have been one of the most wondrous moments in my life was wrecked because of the horror of what I was experiencing. I saw Katie for one second before she was whisked away. I wanted to hold her. No. I tried to turn my head to the left to see her. She was beautiful! She started crying—a very weak cry. She was alive. Beautiful. Then the horrifying pain started again as I was being sewn up. The doctor demanded I be put to sleep. The anesthesiologist said no as the baby was already delivered. The screams got louder as the pain was even more intense. I begged for Mark to help me. He could not do anything. I wanted to die because the pain was so intense. It felt like someone was taking huge hooks and ripping my body apart with them. I must have been given more medicine as I finally calmed down some.

I was sent to my recovery room and hooked up to an automatic Demerol pump where I could control the amounts of medicine. I was constantly pushing the button. Confusion and pain were the norm for the next couple of days. I could not get out of bed for a couple of days because I was not able to stand on my own. I demanded that the nurses bring me my baby out of the nursery. The one nurse stated that I would have her for 18 years, get some rest. I told her I had waited for 10 years to have this baby and I wanted her now. The first time I got to hold Katie is a golden moment in my memory. She was perfect. Yes, this is what I had been waiting for. I snuggled her next to me, and she started nursing immediately. She was my most excellent breast feeder. I nursed her for over two years. She is extremely healthy today.

I was in the hospital recovering from the C-section for over 5 days. I was exhausted. I never let the nurses have her back. I made her a little bed in my bed and we “hung out” for the next five days. It was nice.

I slowly recovered. When I got home on the first day, my hubby had the bed made up really nice with an electric blanket. He made all my meals, and took really good care of me. He made me and Katie feel very loved. Today, he calls her Kat.

Dominic Joseph Moscarello

A couple of years later, I decided that I would like to have just one more baby. Mark said, “No.” I said, “Well, let’s see.” After a wonderful vacation in Las Vegas to renew our marriage vows in 1999, we came home with big winnings—a new baby was on the way! I was excited. Mark was shocked. We found out rather quickly that it was going to be a boy. That was good. Mark wanted another son. Dominic Joseph was going to be his

name. After many disagreements and some compromises Mark let me have a home birth. We went to meet the midwife. I was happy with what she had to offer, and we used her as our primary maternity care provider.

All of the appointments went well. I was getting excited. A little boy! How cool. His initial due date was June 15, 2000. We purchased a big inflatable pool for a water birth. The only problem was that we could not keep the water warm. That was funny. On May 24th, I went into labor around 12 p.m. I called Mark at work and I also called the midwife. My support person, Carol, was also called. Support persons are also called doulas. Mark arrived home first, full of smiles. I was cranky of course. I didn't mean to be. I was anxious, happy, scared, and wow, my baby boy was coming. I asked him to go get the water tub ready. Carol and Brenda came over about the same time, around 4 to 5 p.m. I was in active labor by that time. I was in the pool (it was very cold!) and tried moving around on my hands and knees, cradled in my husband's arms, and anything else I could do to relieve the pain. Finally, Brenda brought in a birthing chair that I sat in. She told me to push. I told her I would not because it hurt too much. She said fine, I would be pregnant for the rest of my life. I said fine. But finally I gave in, and starting pushing. It didn't feel right. His head was being birthed, but it was coming out face up and not face down! No wonder there had been so much pain. She told me to stop pushing, but I didn't. I just wanted the baby to be born as it was so much agony. One more hard push and Dominic flew out. He ripped my vaginal area very badly. He had had his arm and hand stuck behind his shoulder. He sustained some injury from being in that bad position. As soon as he was laid on the floor below me, the midwife told me to talk to Dominic. I screamed, "What's wrong?" She said he is just tired. She rubbed his back, sang to him, and rubbed his feet. I told her not to touch his umbilical cord. She said she knew that. I talked to Dominic and told him to wake up and that Mommy wanted to hold him. He finally did come around about the same time his cord stopped pulsating. Then I got to hold the most beautiful little baby boy in the world—Dominic. Mark and I were just in heaven. Dom whimpered for a little while as he was in pain from the hand and shoulder getting stuck. He nursed really well and fell asleep in my arms. I got cleaned up and then climbed back in bed with my husband. We had pizza and drank champagne. Glorious!

To this date, Dominic is the healthiest, smartest, funniest, child I have. He is the only child who did not have his umbilical cord clamped or cut too soon. He also has not been vaccinated.

Isabella Angela Moscarello

My birth experience with Isabella was what I describe as my disaster birth, my nightmare; now my mission in life is to prevent horrific births and instead promote healthy/safe births for mothers and babies. We must do better!

I was very shocked when I found out that I was pregnant yet again. We all were, but within a couple of months we were all excited. I was very determined to make sure this was the perfect birth this time. I planned extra carefully with this baby. I covered everything that I thought I missed with the other pregnancies. I used the same midwife for Isabella that I did for

my three year old son, Dominic. I also used the same backup doctor that I had used for Dominic. I could have just received all my prenatal care through my certified professional midwife, but I chose to have a doctor involved in my care as well.

My family doctor was my "backup" for both births. I saw her throughout the pregnancy for both Dominic and Isabella. It was our understanding that if anything went wrong, she would take over. The family doctor knew I was having a homebirth with both of these children and also knew my previous history of big babies. This did not stop her from okaying a homebirth, as that is what I had wanted. But I wanted it to be a safe birth as well. She trusted me to make intelligent decisions and to inform her if something was amiss or if she needed to get more involved.

With Isabella's pregnancy I saw my family doctor and my midwife seven times each. Dr. X (real name withheld) ordered three ultrasounds for me as the midwife could not do this. Two of the ultrasounds, one in May and one in June, were supposedly never received by my family doctor's office. The January 2nd ultrasound was supposedly received at the office, but I doubt it was ever reviewed. They have not, to this day, been able to locate that fateful ultrasound that showed she was probably 10 pounds with very little amniotic fluid.

Isabella's due date was January 12th, but we were expecting her early because I had had Dominic three weeks early, and despite this early birth, he still weighed 8.4 pounds. He was posterior (face up) which can cause a lot of problems during birth. But fortunately, he was still not really huge, so he got through the birth canal okay, but not without tearing me to pieces inside and outside the birth canal. I also sustained a massive urinary tract infection. Due to these problems with the previous birth, I wanted to make sure Isabella was in the anterior position and not face up as Dominic had been, as well as Katie (she was my C-section who was also face up, in deep transverse arrest because she was so big, 9 pounds).

On December 27th, I had my husband rush me to the doctor's office because I had already bounced in and out of labor 12 times and I knew something was wrong. I had a "feeling" that the baby was too big and could not come through okay. I was scheduled to see Dr. X, but she was unavailable, so I saw her nurse practitioner. The first thing she said was, "Oh my Kel[ly], this baby is huge." That made me even more scared. We ordered an ultrasound for January 2nd for baby's position and size. Nothing was suggested at this time that homebirth might not be safe, nor that I should start seeing the doctor instead.

The ultrasound showed that Isabella was 8 lbs. 14 oz., +/- 1 lb. and there was somewhat diminished amniotic fluid, which the radiologist thought might be normal. It also showed that (a) I still had ten more days to go to my due date and (b) that she was not face up or face down, but stuck right in the middle of both these positions. The radiologist's office called Dr. X and said everything was fine and should I go home? This question seemed odd: if everything was fine, why would the radiologist ask Dr. X if I should go home?

Everything was not fine. Any baby over 8 pounds is considered macrosomic and can be problematic at birth because of shoulder dystocia, and because of the large size. I was already 14 ounces over that, plus perhaps an additional pound,

plus I had two more weeks to go! Plus the fact that the amniotic fluid was diminishing. Yes, that may have been “normal,” but you don’t take chances like that with mommas and babies if you are not watching them closely. Two warning bells from this ultrasound, but again, nothing was said and no advice was given, nothing written in the chart. Nothing. No additional appointment set to return for a recheck.

So, I went home, still scared, and saw my midwife the next day. She said everything looked fine, and yes the baby was really big, but not to worry. I told her all the times I had been in labor. She wasn’t listening. I asked her for another appointment and said it was not necessary since I would be going into labor soon. Okay, I thought that was strange, but I trusted her.

Okay, I thought, well two people have told me I am fine, so I should not worry. But I did, every day, as I went in and out of labor eight more times. I was getting terrified. That was the night of the 15th that I decided I would go back to my family doctor on the 16th and let her take over completely and just go to the hospital. I never got the chance. Hard labor came at 4 a.m. on the 16th, and by 7 a.m. I was pushing. Isabella and her head was out (face up as I was so afraid would happen) with no further progress toward complete delivery. The midwife called emergency 9-1-1. The firemen could not get her out either. Recognizing the seriousness of this situation, I screamed at the medics, “Take me to the hospital.” They would not do it. Instead, the head medic pulled on her head, and when that did not work, he placed his fingers in my rectum over and over again for approximately 12 minutes. [See Editorial Comment at the conclusion of this article.] Finally I was put on the stretcher and we left. Meanwhile, I thought I was dying, my husband was just petrified, and we thought Isabella was already dead. Her little face had turned completely blue/purple. I thought she had already died and I did not think my death was that far behind.

Finally the firemen loaded me on the stretcher and took me to the ambulance running faster than they thought they ever could. Once inside the ambulance, one of the firemen tried to get an IV started in my arm. He initially was unsuccessful since my veins were collapsing from shock. Finally, he managed to get one in. They kept working on my baby giving her oxygen. I got another contraction, pushed, and out she flew. The head medic said “he’s not breathing.” So I assumed we had another son. The Greentown Fire Department tied off Bella’s cord with a rubber band they found in the ambulance. Obviously not sterile, and not “procedure.” The firemen started CPR and when we arrived at the hospital; *Bella’s skin* was still not a normal color (thankfully, I did not see her), pulse was 60, and not breathing on her own. Once they intubated her at the hospital, her body pinked up and pulse was 142. Her weight was 10.3 pounds. Another note to make was that Brenda forgot her emergency equipment at home. The medics brought theirs, but left everything at my house as well and did not have backup on

the squad. As soon as I arrived at the hospital, I was written up for child abuse, which is completely outrageous!

Meanwhile I was on the maternity floor, emergency room, somewhere, getting stitched up. I thought my child was dead and was making funeral arrangements in my head. It was horrible. I could not believe it. All my fears had become realty. I had tried to warn everyone. It didn’t matter. No one had listened and now my baby was gone.

It was about an hour later that the NICU doctor came and told us that Bella was alive and on life support. I was stunned that she had come back to me. That started what has been my life for the past four years. She has brain damage in the motor development areas of her brain, still does not eat properly, is not gaining weight very well, and is already developing serious stiffness in her upper and lower body.

Now, my question goes back to who is liable for this? It was not just an accident. I tried to prevent it, tried to warn my professionals that something was not right. This was my fifth child and I knew that she was too big and I was worried this might lead to a difficult delivery. And I know that some people say that I should have never had the baby at home, and I should have known, etc, etc. But I knew I did not want another C-section where I was not numbed properly first, and I wanted to try (key word is *try*) for a homebirth. That is why I had medical doctor backup—in case homebirth no longer became an option. I was not hell-bent on having a homebirth if it jeopardized my baby. Plus, as many know all too well, hospitals cannot guarantee a safe delivery either. Maybe safer in some cases, but no 100% guarantees on everything.

Another warning bell should have gone off when the radiologist indicated “diminished amniotic fluid.” The firemen that caught Isabella as she flew out, said that I was completely dry. There was virtually no fluid inside me whatsoever.

On December 27th, I alerted Dr. X’s office that something was wrong. I should have been put on alert then when Nurse X was concerned that the baby was so big.

I felt so bad for the longest time because I feel I should have screamed louder or made more phone calls. I was so ready for this birth and had prepared everything. I was even comfortable having the baby at home because Greentown Fire was only 1/2 mile away. I felt that maybe I should have pushed harder. I trusted these medical professionals to know what they were doing and I went to them for advice. I was not willing to jeopardize myself or my baby’s life. It just seems like no one listened to me, perhaps thinking I was exaggerating my concerns because I was pregnant and hormonal.

Oh, and I went to the radiologist’s office to pick up my chart with all my ultrasounds and records from Dom’s and Isabella’s pregnancy. Well, it should come as no surprise that my charts were gone! Completely gone, missing, kaput, no more. They were finally located about 3 months later with no explanation.

Consequences of immediate cord clamping: Brain damage, also called cerebral palsy, H.I.E, developmental delay, mental retardation, A.D.D., autism, etc., etc., etc.

At 4 years old, this is what my daughter’s life is like:

1. Bella cannot eat—she “eats” through a feeding tube. After eating like this, she almost always vomits which destroys her teeth and the lining of her esophagus.
2. Bella cannot sit up, even for a few seconds. She will fall over and hurt herself.
3. She cannot take a bubble bath—she will fall over and crack her head and drown.
4. She cannot swing on a swing.
5. She cannot hug her mommy.
6. She cannot tell me she loves me.
7. She cannot talk.
8. She cannot walk—probably never will.
9. Seizures are starting to become a normal daily activity.

I could go on and on. But it is too heartbreaking to do so.

Consequences of flat-on-the-back birthing and episiotomies

1) More episiotomies are “supposedly” needed. This procedure scars a woman’s vagina for the rest of her life. She will never again function the same. Sex will never be as pleasurable again. Losing control of her bladder is another common symptom that may or may not be correctable by surgery.

2) Flat-on-the-back positions can increase the chances of shoulder dystocia which can cause a baby to have permanent injury to their body and perhaps their brain because the baby is stuck in the birth canal too long. Giving birth on your hands/knees, sitting forward, side-lying and other positions greatly reduce the chance that a shoulder dystocia will cause permanent injury.

3) Let’s talk about the psychological damage done to the new mother. The new mother has to live with the daily nightmares of a birth that was horrifying. She will never “get over it.” Giving birth is a powerful experience; memories should be cherished, loved, honored, and replayed over and over. The only problem is that if the birth memories are horrific ones, those too get replayed every day to the severe detriment and psychological destruction of the woman, and often times her mate as well. Many marriages cannot survive such a traumatic birth because the husband feels as if he has “lost his wife.”



Isabella in NICU, 1-week old, 10 lbs. 4.4 oz.
on January 23, 2003

**Medical Veritas Editorial Comment
by Michel Odent, MD**

Many maneuvers have been described for the management of “shoulder dystocia” including: Mc Robert’s position, turning the mother on her hands and knees, delivery of the further arm, corkscrew maneuver, etc. However I never heard of the technique used in this particular case by the head medic. Furthermore I don’t understand the rationale of this technique, since the objective should rather be to push the baby’s anterior shoulder backward—which is stuck above the pubic bone while the head is already outside.

I must add that, although I have been involved in about 15,000 births in half a century, I have no personal experience of such maneuvers. For me it is bookish knowledge. I am convinced that a shoulder dystocia is almost always the consequence of an inappropriate interference. When the baby’s head can get out, there is no reason why the shoulders cannot get out as well.