

I went to my 41 week midwife appointment and came home with a baby, though it wasn't quite that simple. I was having very minor contractions, was about 40% effaced and not dilated at all. Chris found that with every contraction, the baby's heart rate went down. She sent me to Shady Grove Hospital to see Sharon for further evaluation. More of the same at the hospital and an ultrasound found that my amniotic fluid was low. Time to induce.

A medicine (I can't recall the name) was applied directly to my cervix to begin the induction and I was left overnight for the process to begin. I slept through the night, waking to what felt like period cramps. In the morning I was 1.5 cm dilated.

Chris was on duty in the morning and she started the more serious work of induction. I was given pitocin and it was slowly increased throughout the day to make the contractions stronger. My wife and a good friend were on hand to aid me with the natural birth strategies. I used a birth ball and did a lot of pacing. Movement was limited because I was on the fetal monitor and had an IV. Chris was on-hand throughout to give me massages and rub my feet and give general advice on positions and pain relief strategies. The nurse on duty was amazing as well. I was told that she was a former midwife and was well-versed in natural childbirth and loves working with the midwives.

Being induced is much different than a natural childbirth. Pitocin makes early labor much more intense. The contractions came faster (I was 2 cm with contractions every 2 minutes) so I didn't get the rest between contractions that I had heard about in early labor. It was very exhausting.

I was dilating slowly and by 6pm, I was only 2.5 cm. Chris thought we should break the water sack to move the process. Meconium was found in the amniotic fluid, indicating the baby was stressed. She warned me that breaking the water sack would make the contractions more intense, which was true. At this point I started begging for some pain relief. Chris recommended Nubain, which she explained takes the edge off of the contractions. This was a great relief for about an hour.

Chris went off duty and Sharon came back on. Monitoring revealed that the contractions, now stronger because the water sack was broken, were having an effect on the baby's heartbeat. We all agreed to an epidural so that I could relax and the heart beat could be better monitored. After further monitoring, Sharon said that the baby was under too much stress and that a c-section was recommended.

A doctor was called in to perform the procedure. Sharon was by my side the entire time. She explained what each person was doing and she made me feel comfortable. A neonatologist was on hand because they were worried about our daughter's condition, but thankfully our daughter was healthy.

Sharon followed me to recovery. I was experiencing severe shivering, which Sharon explained happens after births (c-section or vaginal) because of the rush of hormones. Sharon said it was time to breastfeed, but I said that I couldn't hold my daughter because of the shivers. Sharon said I didn't have to do anything and she placed my daughter onto my breast and guided her to breastfeed.

This wasn't the birth for which I had spent months planning, but it was a beautiful birth. The midwives were by my side the entire time, helping me feel comfortable, supported, and in control. I went to the midwives to avoid an unnecessary induction or c-section. But I also said that I was going to let go, and let whatever happens happen. Most important to me was to surround myself with a team of people I could trust to make responsible decisions, people who I knew listened to me and cared about me, and then let go and let them do their job. I feel that my induction and c-section were the best thing for my baby who was not handling labor well, and I am very thankful to MCA for such a wonderful and beautiful birth.