

“Why are we not in a hospital, why are we not in a hospital, oh why are we not in a hospital.”

My husband told me that these same words went through his mind a second time during the birth of our second son.

Again, we decided to have a home birth. We planned the birth to take place at the same house, in the same bathtub, as our first born, having it been so successful the first time. I followed the same birth plan, attended prenatal yoga, and practiced meditation techniques. I relaxed and rested the days leading up to it and prepared the essentials we would need. The one difference was packing a second diaper bag for our oldest son, who would be camping with his grandparents while I had the baby at their home.

I was seven days past my due date. I recall having very mild contractions throughout the day. My husband kept pestering me, asking if these meant the baby was coming. He kept reiterating that he needed an answer so that he could alert his parents. Of course I wasn't sure but eventually said yes, the baby was coming.

We packed the family up and made our way into the city. It was an identical journey to the one we made almost two years previously. I had two contractions on the road. He asked if we could stop at McDonald's, which we did. And we waited in line forever, while my husband cursed and anxiously wiped at his face.

We arrived at the house at the same time as my husband's Mom. She took our son with a wish of good luck to us. The day had lingered on but by this time, it was getting late. And the baby was coming.

We called our midwife and she informed us that, the same as last time, the barometric pressure had dropped (it was raining) and that many women were going into labour. In fact, both she and the backup midwife were attending other births, and that she would have to send another midwife who was sick with a cold but would make it there in time. My husband slept on the couch while I watched my favourite funny show and ate all the McDonalds by myself. My water broke around 2 o'clock in the morning. I woke my husband, asking him to pour the bath. He helped me up the stairs as I was under quite a bit of pressure now. He helped me to get into the tub and left to call the midwife again. She was on her way. In the tub, I had one painful contraction and was shocked when I felt the urge to push. I shouted for my husband to come back, saying the baby was coming. He passed the phone to me so that I could talk to the midwife. She was wonderful, sick as a dog, but still on her way to see me. She told me that if I had the baby in the tub, he would be blue in colour and it would be harder to tell if he was okay. She said it would be best to move to the bed, especially if she didn't make it in time. She also told me that if we were worried, we could call an ambulance. She estimated that they would arrive the same time as she would. She also told me that if I laid on my side, it would slow the progress of the birth a little, allowing her to make it there on time.

We hung up and my husband transported me to the bed. I recall him asking me if we should call an ambulance. I was tired but still in good spirits, especially since this birth already seemed to be much faster and less painful than last time. I laid on my side as I was told, and let my body keep pushing the baby, without assisting the progress. Five contractions occurred in this position, and I kept from birthing our

son. It was difficult but not impossible. I knew I couldn't keep it up forever though; it wasn't painful and I wasn't too tired, but I was worried it wouldn't be healthy for my son. My husband watched as I struggled. I could see the torment and shock on his face as he kept straining to hear the sound of a vehicle outside. Finally, we heard a car pull up. Car doors opened and closed. And opened and closed. We heard the front door open and my husband started to yell that we were on the second floor and that the baby was coming. He was in the doorway, halfway between the stairs to where the midwife was and the room to where I was. Not wanting (or able) to delay my baby's healthy birth anymore, I flipped onto all fours and let my baby be born. Seeing this progression, in slow motion I imagine, my husband lunged into the room and stretched his arms out to catch the baby as if he were a football in the air. A successful catch, he laid the baby on the bed, allowing me to pick him up and gingerly uncoil the cord from his body. He gave a mighty cry and I hugged him. Our midwife stood there in the doorway giving instructions. I was grateful to her for not coming in to do things herself for fear my new baby would catch her cold. It was also very nice to complete the tasks ourselves, being able to really welcome and bond with our baby. He was chubby and splotchy. Not as pimply and wrinkly as his brother, but he had a squashed nose and humungous cheeks. He was quite happy to nurse and loved to be held.

Before long, a second midwife arrived. I was patched up while my son nursed, not needing as much work as the previous occasion. My husband called our families to greet our newest addition. When they arrived, my husband took him downstairs, greeting everyone by telling them he had a new profession as a doctor.

The Baby Proceedings took place in front of everyone. Our son was carefully weighed and measured, and his body and joints checked over. He was 7 lbs 14 oz and 20 ½ inches in length. He was very sturdy and still is to this day.

Finally, our first born son entered the room. He wanted to sit on my lap and watch the baby. He didn't smile or ask what it was that was resting on my chest. My husband said he had a look that plainly said "I don't like him" written on his face.

After all the congratulations and moments documented into memories, we realized that both our boys were born on Sundays and on the seventh day of the month, almost to within the hour, to a Mom with a belly full of McDonalds hamburgers. It was another lovely day.