

Emily's Birth Story:

Well, Miss Emily was going to take her sweet time -- but the doctor had other plans. My midwife, Nada Jean always warned me that first babies are statistically 8 days late, and although we were hoping that would not be true for us, it was! We tried EVERYTHING to get her to come, especially once I was 39-40 weeks! I was feeling great, and never did get swollen ankles or anything, so we went out every day, walking a lot. I even walked tons of stairs every day hoping it would start labor. Spicy food, raspberry tea (supposedly can induce labor naturally), sex, you name it, we tried it (assuming it was safe - I did NOT try castor oil because I heard that could not be good). But, she was stubborn!

Since we passed the due date of July 4 by a few days, he had been monitoring us more closely. I was dilated to 3, effaced 80%, had lost my mucus plug, and had been having irregular contractions, but nothing progressing toward imminent labor. He felt that she might get too big for me to deliver naturally (since my mother had all 3 of us by Cesarean though we weighed between 5 and 6 pounds), and didn't want me to go much later. SO, he gave us a choice of Tuesday the 9th or Wednesday the 10th.

The night before she was born, I was having contractions more than just the Braxton Hicks ones before, getting sort of closer together, but not too much. I didn't really want an induction, and was walking at the mall hoping to bring on labor. But Tuesday night, Julian and I talked. I think if left on her own, she would have come later that week, but the doctor did not want to wait, and we decided that since there was likely to not be a ton of change by Wednesday, we'd go ahead and do it on Tuesday. That way my mom could have 2 full weeks with us after Emily was born (and Julian couldn't stand waiting anymore!) So, on Tuesday morning July 9, 7 am in Bangkok Thailand (Monday night 7 pm CST) we started the process of induction.

7/9/02

At **7 am**, we went to labor and delivery prep, where they first put me on a fetal monitor to check for her heart rate, which was fine, contractions, which were mild at that point. We registered, and then they gave me an enema and shaved my perineal area (ugh, but not as bad as I thought it would be!).

At **8 am**, they moved me to a labor and delivery room, hooked up the fetal monitor, and started my IV with glucose and syntocin (for induction).

By **8:30 am**, I could tell the contractions were harder, and from 8:30 to 11 am they were 2 minutes apart, giving me only 60 seconds to rest between each, and lasting a minute or more each time. I mostly felt them in my back, and they were pretty excruciating. I mostly remember hitting my hand on the bed rail every time - for some reason that helped me to focus on the pain in my hand, not in my back!

At **9 am**, the doctor visited, and said I was at 3 1/2 centimeters dilated, 80% effaced, and her head was at -2 station. He decided to break my waters (which were clear, no meconium) to speed things along, and BOY, did it do that!! Contractions got harder, and although I tried to relax (Julian played music, dimmed the lights, gave foot massages, held a cool washcloth to my head, and burned aromatherapy candles and oil), they got pretty intense, especially in my back.

At **10 am**, I begged for pain relief but still didn't want an epidural, so they gave me a low dose of pethidine to take the edge off the contractions. I could still feel them, but was able to relax more in between - never did get drowsy or nauseated from it. I'm afraid I did get snappy at Julian sometimes, because I could not tolerate being touched during a contraction. But I was SO glad he was there.

At **10:45 am**, the doctor checked me and said I was at 6 cm dilated, 90% effaced, and could have the epidural if I wanted. I had been torn about that decision, all through pregnancy said I didn't want to have one, because I was scared of them, but was ALL READY by this time! (my contractions were more intense because of the induction). So at 11 am, the epidural lady came, and managed to get it in between 2 contractions -- what a blessing! I didn't feel any pain on it going in, just pressure from her pushing. I could still feel my legs but it felt like they were asleep. I could also tell when I was having contractions, but had no pain with them. Within 5 minutes I could relax!

At **11:30 am** I suddenly started to feel the contractions harder, and told Julian I could feel through the epidural and needed to push -- go get the nurses! The nurse who checked me said I was at 10 cm, fully dilated!!! I had to breathe through 4 contractions just to give them time to get things set up and to get the doctor!

At **11:45 am**, I started to push. At first it was hard to figure out what/where/how to push, even though I had done tons of Kegel exercises. Once I got the hang of it, though, I had no problem pushing through the epidural. Two of the nurses coached me, and when we were at the last push, they pushed with me from the top of the uterus. The doctor tried to stretch me, but because the pushing stage went by so fast, he had to give me an episiotomy. I didn't feel that at all, didn't even know until Julian told me later. I only had to push through 5-6 sets of contractions, 2-3 pushes apiece, and at noon, she was born! They had a large mirror for me to see her with, and at first I could see her head, but it got bumped, so I didn't actually get to see her being born.

12:00 noon Emily Grace was born!!! 6 lbs, 11 oz, and 19.5 inches long!!!

Emily cried almost immediately, and was just a little bluish on her extremities. They wiped and wrapped her while he gave me 5 stitches, then handed her to us. I did feel him sewing me up, and had to have 2 shots of painkiller down there - yikes! I had only mild contractions while expelling the placenta. The nurse took a picture of us together, and then Julian and I took turns holding her. I tried to nurse her, and she licked, nuzzled, and finally latched on but didn't really suck much before they took her to ICU for a couple of hours of tests, while I rested. My mom and sister came to see me in the recovery room, and then went to stand watch over Emily! They said she was very alert, looked around the whole time, kicked, and screamed, but then her Daddy sang to her and she calmed right down. Apparently the drugs had NO effect on her. They told us she weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long -- so her weight was just between the 2 of us (5 pounds 10 oz, and 6 pounds 12 oz).

I was thirsty, with a bruised perineal area, but only a little sting from the episiotomy. We called a few friends while we waited to get sent to maternity. At 2:30, they moved me up to maternity, and served me lunch. They brought Emily to our room at 3, and I got to really bond with her for the first time. She took a few minutes to latch on, but once she did, was able to suck quite efficiently! She has such tiny hands and big bright eyes, also some light brown hair, and is just beautiful! She is very strong, and was able to kick off her ankle

bracelet and unwrap her blanket to throw it off. My mom says she looks like she has my hair and lips, and Julian thinks she has his dad's nose. No matter who - she is our beautiful, sweet girl! Can't believe she's finally here!!!

My only regret was that when I asked for the Pethidine narcotic, I should have had them check to see how far dilated I was. I thought since it had only been 2 hours that there was no way I was dilated enough to have an epidural. Probably I was, and could have done without the shot, but apparently it did not affect her and make her drowsy, so I guess it was ok. Julian said he asked them to give me a very low dose because I am so sensitive to medicine. I am DEFINITELY glad I had the epidural though!

The episiotomy healed up completely within 2 weeks, no more pain. Also had a (blush) hemorrhoid that healed up in a week or so. I really felt pretty good after labor, was up out of bed within 4 hours, and doing ok. Recovery has been easy, and she is a fairly good baby, but it has taken us about a month to feel like we have things figured out as far as what she likes, what her schedule is, etc. Breastfeeding has its challenges, but is going well. It has been such a great experience – can't wait to see how her life will unfold!