

Liam's birth story

4/16/04

Walked to the park with Emmy, sex that night

11 pm Started having regular contractions, every 5 minutes, lasting 45-60 seconds, but they stopped after 1/5 hours

4/17/04

Walked to the grocery store and back, out to eat (eggplant parmesan) at Olive Garden.

9 pm At Mom's house I started noticing irregularly timed contractions.

9:30 Contractions started being more regular, 5 minutes apart, lasting 45-60 seconds

10:00 Contractions were lasting 60-75 seconds.

10:30 We decided to go to the hospital, but I wanted Julian to go back to the mission house in Little Rock to get a few last minute things. We called Debbie and Kimberly & Jon to let them know of the possibility.

11:00 We left for the hospital

4/18/04

12:30 4 cm dilated, 80% effaced, having contractions 3 minutes apart, so they checked me in. The nurse was surprised I didn't want an epidural yet, said "these are intense but you seem to be handling them well." Emily nursed during their check-in questions.

1:00 am Kimberly, Jon, Amanda, Mom, Julian and Emily were all in the labor/delivery room. Had my music on, now able to settle in after checking in, getting the monitors on and my iv started. Contractions were intense but bearable. Peed, saw a little bloody show for the first time.

2:15 5 cm dilated, contractions very bearable, felt no need for meds

4:15 Contractions slowed down. Julian and I took a walk around the hospital to kick up contractions more. Saw more bloody show when I used the toilet

6:15 Nursed Emily to stimulate more contractions; haven't had any since around 4

7:15 No more contractions – very discouraged, wish we hadn't come. Nurses told me the doctor asked if I objected to pitocin (I did, strongly, since Em's birth was so intense after the use of pitocin to induce). They said he would come in the next few hour to break my water, because at 5 cm they didn't want to release me to go

home. Breaking water sounds like a good idea to me, as long as I don't have to have pitocin.

8:30 Doctor Alston broke my water, just a small tear, not a big gush. He said I was at a stretchy 5 cm, 80% effaced, and the nurse said to expect a baby soon.

9:30 Contractions were so intense again (started about 20-30 minutes after they broke my water) that I was crying for an epidural. They said it would take 30 minutes for the anesthesiologist to arrive. 6 cm dilated

9:45 Felt the intense need to throw up, had dry heaves and chills, and told Julian "I'm in transition, I won't have time for the epidural." I also told them to take Em out of the room so I wouldn't scare her. She stayed with my sister, Kimberly, in the waiting room. Kimberly's husband Jon left to go teach his Sunday School class.

[I had really wanted to try natural this time, and we had read the Bradley method book in preparation, so I wasn't terribly disappointed at not getting it, I had just gotten so scared at the intensity that I asked. Had the anesthesiologist been there ASAP, I would probably have gotten it and regretted it].

10:00 The anesthesiologist arrived, but I was needing to push, and refused the epidural (she looked rather disgusted at having come out on Sunday morning; I apologized and thanked her). I was 9 cm with a cervical lip but my body was pushing involuntarily. The nurse (Buffy) let me do 1 contraction worth of practice pushes, with her hand on my cervix, and she said I was a "good pusher."

They called Dr. Alston (who was changing) and told him I couldn't wait to push. They began coaching me at pushing. Julian was on my left, helping to pull up my head, a nurse holding my left leg, my Mom (who had 3 C-sections and had never seen a vaginal birth) holding my right leg, and my sister Amanda (in LPN training, who had seen 3 vaginal births in school) watching from behind the doctor.

I pushed for about 20 minutes/ 8-9 contractions. I was definitely glad I'd read the Bradley book. Also, I'd read that while pregnant, pay close attention to all the muscles/how you hold your body when having a bowel movement, because that's the set of muscles/position you'll need to push – that was SO true, and although I sometimes got too tense to do this, when I relaxed enough to remember that, THOSE were the more productive pushes.

I had labored most of the intense contractions on one side or the other, which were more comfortable, and only turned on my back when they checked me. I had a hydrating iv the whole time, and was on the monitor most of the time, but could unhook it and walk around anytime I wanted. No other prep (like the enema, shave, and catheter with Em). I did try turning onto hands and knees at one point, and it felt great, but Liam's heartrate dropped so they asked me to turn over again.

Julian stood at my side most of the night, other than when we both napped (4-8 am when contractions stopped). He rubbed my back, which helped make the contractions immensely more bearable. I was amazed at how much more prepared we both were, and how much more in control I felt, not having the pitocin induction. He stood beside me helping coach the pushing, reminding me to relax my body in between contractions, and helping to pull my chin to my chest. He said I got wild-eyed a few times, and one time Buffy had to yell to get my attention, and I focused on her coaching.

I don't remember paying attention to anyone else but Julian, really. Without my glasses, it even took me a few minutes to realize that Mom was holding my right leg. I had a hard time fighting the urge to clench my legs together when pushing, and they had to remind me to let them fall apart. I was amazed at how much more in control of the pushing I was, without the epidural.

Dr. Alston told them at one point (I didn't hear him) that I was going to tear, but he didn't have time to cut an episiotomy because contractions were coming so close together, so he just held the perineum and coached me to push very gently. I couldn't believe I could do it – but I did, and I only had a slight superficial tear, parallel to the episiotomy I got with Em, which just took a few stitches to repair. Hemmhroids flared up again.

10:40 William Michael (Liam) was born!!! 8 lbs, 9 oz, and 21 inches long!!!

When he was crowning, the doctor said “I have way underestimated his size!” (He was expecting 7 to 7.5 pounds). Crowning was not as bad as his chest – his shoulders seemed to get a little stuck, turns out his chest was bigger around than his head (14 cm head, 14.5 cm chest).

Mom was in tears when he was crowning, and I heard her say “oh, Amy!” She said she didn't recognize the head as a head at first, because it was purple and the ridges of the soft spot were overlapping to a point. She was overwhelmed at seeing me in pain, but excited to see Liam right away. Julian was right there saying “Hi” to Liam, just grinning and crying like a proud Daddy! Liam cried immediately, even before his chest was delivered! I got to hold him immediately, all goopy (something I didn't get to do with Emily), and was amazed at what a little chunk he was!! He was purplish, but Apgars were 7 and 9.

He nursed immediately, with lots of strong sucking, and we tandem nursed twice in the first couple of hours, the first time about 45 minutes after he was born. He lost down to 8 lbs 1 oz., and he's gained back up to 1 ounce below his birthweight at 11 days old. When Emily first met him she kissed him, but the first time she saw me holding him, I was nursing him, and she looked so hurt, but she asked me if we could “share nums,” and of course I said yes, and from then on she was fine with him nursing as long as she can share.

My brother-in-law, Jon, brought donuts when he came back from church, and although I don't really like donuts, that blueberry cake donut was the best thing I'd ever eaten (after going almost 18 hours without food!) The nurse also brought me some cheese, crackers, and juice before lunch was served.

Liam went to the nursery at around 2:00 because of slight wheezing, but all was well, and we roomed in for the next 2 days. Julian stayed with us in the extra bed, which we pushed together with mine to form a family bed (first time the hospital had seen that!), and Liam co-slept from the beginning.

Emily stayed with my Mom and sister Amanda. She did GREAT! Thankfully, she'd night-weaned at 15 months, and doesn't always have to nurse to sleep now (at 21 months). She only got fussy for a few minutes each night, asking for Mommy and Daddy. She slept with Mom, and came to visit us a couple of times each day. Daddy also visited her at my Mom's house on the 2nd day. Mom brought her to the hospital for our homecoming, and she was thrilled when we all 4 got back together at our house.

Emmy has been GREAT with the baby, wanting to kiss and "pet" and hold (with help) and hasn't shown any real jealousy, other than to want to nurse almost every time he does (which I was prepared for). The hospital lactation consultant was so thrilled that we were tandem nursing; she brought me a book, and asked several questions, and said she'd never really seen anyone doing it.

Liam had an umbilical hematoma, and excessive bleeding during his circumcision, so the pediatrician said we should stay an extra day, and make an appointment with the hematology department at the local Children's Hospital soon.

I have had a GREAT recovery, SO much easier than with Emmy – I was up out of bed almost immediately, have been out of the house everyday since he was born, my tear is completely healed at 10 days postpartum, I haven't had any bleeding since day 8, I've had energy, and just generally felt great! We feel our family is complete now, and Julian has had the big "V," but if I were doing it again, I'd DEFINITELY go natural again!

FWIW, just a humorous side note – I DID have an epidural with Emily, who was 6 lbs 11 oz. at birth, and NOT with Liam, at 8 lbs 9 oz. – and I'm a petite 4'11" so my doc was amazed that I could deliver such a large baby, especially without drugs!