

Firstly I just want to mention why I chose Home Birth. When I first went to my GP and found out I was pregnant the first thing she said to me was, 'Who's your ObGYN'. I was a bit baffled as I hadn't even thought of that at such early stages and she recommended that I book myself in ASAP to get a spot. So, I panicked and rung every ObGYN in Perth and finally found one. Later I got on the net and started to do a bit of research about ObGYN's and then realised there are of course other options out there. Perth has a fabulous Community Midwife Program and I spoke to them. I also visited Charles Gardiner Hospital for an info day.

I then started to research more about home births and joined a yoga pregnancy class which was also informative on natural birthing (and very supportive and encouraging for homebirths). The more I researched and the more I spoke to women of all their experiences - family, friends and strangers. I discovered that Home Birth was the best option for me because I didn't want medical intervention (of course unless absolutely necessary) and the pressure to have it, I wanted to be in surroundings where I felt calm and safe for the birth of my baby, I didn't want interruptions throughout the birth and I wanted to have the person who delivered my baby to be highly qualified, attentive and intune with my needs and the safe delivery of my baby. And as I was a fit, healthy, young woman, I was a perfect candidate.

My partner and I decided to move back to North Queensland, so the lovely midwife who looked after me in the CMWA program (Sue Cudlipp) found Judy Chapman - a private midwife.

So, we moved back to NQ to be closer to our family and friends and I met up with Judy, who was lovely, she had years of experience, and a good reputation at the hospital she also works at.

My experience having a home birth was all that I'd hoped for and more, it was a long labor, but I was prepared for that possibility and with so much support from my partner, midwife and family I was in great care.

I find it very, very sad that we may lose the choice to birth at home. I think the government should allow it and even rebate the money we have to pay to the private midwife's or the CMWA program in Perth should be statewide. Home birth's are far less a burden on the medical system, even pre and post care and research has shown that women who birth naturally have less chance of post natal depression. I know from my account I was so relaxed and in the privacy of my own surroundings, breastfeeding wasn't made a big deal about (like hospitals) and came naturally to me. As a result of all of my pre & post care and the home birth I have a very calm, healthy baby and I believe it comes from the very beginning her life in this world.

Lastly, I think it comes down to our GP's too. That they should not be 'one-sided' in their advice to women birthing. Instead they should simply encourage women to research pregnancy pre and post and birth and decide for themselves which option would be best for them. And hopefully home birth will remain an option too.

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Boxing Day Baby!

It was christmas morning (2008) and I was already 7 days overdue, thinking I would have actually had the baby 3 weeks ago (braxton hicks made me certain I'd have an early baby?!) I was beginning to think that 'everyone' was right I am probably going to have a xmas baby.

I got up went to the loo and to my delight had a 'show'. I jumped back into bed and whispered merry xmas to my partner and added, 'I think we're going to have a baby today!!'. I explained to him I'd prefer us to keep it to ourselves as it wouldn't necessarily mean I'd have the baby that day and just to see how the day progresses.

That day we sheepishly kept our little secret to ourselves as I was having only very light contractions throughout the day and evening. Of course I had alerted my midwife's attention and kept her up to date throughout the day. By 4am in the morning I woke to go to the loo, I felt very restless and woke my partner to ask him to take me for a big walk as I felt like I needed a bit of a help to move things along. As we were staying in his parents house we snuck out, still dressed in our pyjamas and night robes! As we live in a very hilly country town it was ideal, because the time I got home and walked up our steep driveway I was certainly in full swing with my contractions getting stronger and closer apart.

We told his parents and sister that it was time for them to evacuate and we rung the midwife to let her know that the contractions we're stronger and getting closer to 10 minutes apart. She had just had xmas day with family in a near by town and let us know she'd be with us soon.

Judy (midwife) checked me, and assured baby was nice and calm, and in a good position. We set up the room, but left the pool for later as Judy told me she'd let me know when it was time to fill it.

My mum and sister came over about mid morning and I was of course in great spirits and enjoyed a massage from my sister - magic hands!

By lunchtime still no action so I suggested Mum and sis to go home and have their boxing day lunch as they planned, and left Judy, Leon and I to relax and let the day unfold.

I focused on the hypno birthing method and felt that kept me nice and calm and maximise my rest after each contraction. Judy was magnificent, helping me through my contractions and of course my partner Leon was a true star!

It got to late afternoon and the contractions were getting closer and far more intense, by this stage I was in the pool and loving it! I asked Judy if I'd have my baby by dark and she said, 'hmmm no mate, a bit later than that'. I didn't let this disappoint me, as I just wanted to prepare myself further - mentally and physically for the next few hours as I was starting to tire. I also agreed to get my cervix checked to see how far dilated I was and at that point I think it was about 7cm.

My Mum and sister joined us and at this stage I was in my 'zone' so I wasn't as social as before. Leon started taking me into the shower and every now and then reminding me I needed to go to the loo. Judy was fabulous, keeping a close eye on me, checking bubs heart beat and continually with pen and paper recording her report on my birth.

Finally at around 9pm I just wanted to 'give up' (which is a sign of the transition stage), fortunately Leon remembered all I had discussed with him in the different stages of labor and suggested I go to the loo! Which was great because that's exactly what I felt like. My waters hadn't broken yet and when I got on the loo I just wanted to poo, so I pushed and pushed and Leon looked to see that I was ok (down there) and what he thought was a baby's head, was actually my water's membrane! So he was excited thinking I was going to have this baby right there - in the loo! Judy assessed me and said, ok that's yr waters not the baby's head, let's get you back in the pool.

So, in the pool half an hour later the waters broke than after that three big pushes and Savannah was born! I scooped her (with Judy's assistance passing her to me) out of the water and she was wide eyed and looking straight at me. She was quiet and peaceful and I said my first words to her in my arms, 'Hello Darling!' - Magical moment I will never forget.

I was moved to a bed and she lay on my tummy, shortly after she went to the breast. It was such peaceful and happy moment. She weighed in at 8 pounds 14 ounces born at 10.12pm.

I recovered well and went straight back to my post baby weight within a week?! Savannah fed well and we had regular visits from Judy until we were up and running independantly.

When asked by people I always say 'Yes I'd definitely do it again', I hope that this will be a possibility for us.