

## Emma & Jim's story of Max's birth

Emma and Jim came to Zana's hypnobirthing course, pregnant with their first baby, feeling worried about labour and how Emma might cope with contractions. She didn't feel very confident and had a phobia of hospitals. Emma hoped the course might help her achieve the homebirth she wanted but if she did need to transfer to hospital that she would be able to remain calm while this happened.

After the birth of their son, Emma said that she felt she had a traumatic labour, but that she came through it and that they are now the proud parents of Max. She was concerned that her story "might not be any good" to share with others but Zana's opinion is that it shows how hypnobirthing can help even when things take a deviation from the hoped-for route. The only part that threw Emma off-course was the intensity of the contractions with the syntocinon drip; she described the contractions as "no longer mine", which is an excellent way of thinking of it.

Here is her story...

The hypnobirthing was amazing but only worked for so long. I will explain why.

I went into labour on Tues 29th May at 3.30pm. I started having contractions whilst listening to one of the hypnobirthing downloads. I had 3 contractions in half an hour. My home labour started off text book. Hypnobirthing was amazing! I stayed focused and in control and managed my own contractions well.

My mucus plug and waters had gone by around 10.45pm. The contractions got stronger and closer together.

The first midwife arrived at about 2am and confirmed I was 4cm dilated and so in active labour.

From then on, unfortunately, my contractions gradually started spacing out. By around 10am the midwives had to persuade me to go to hospital to have a

syntocinon drip to ramp up my contractions. I eventually caved with Jim's help and support.

[In retrospect Emma wondered if the presence of the midwives and the uniform may have subconsciously triggered her phobia of hospitals. Raised adrenaline tends to have a detrimental effect on labour.]

I used the "3 2 1 relax" and closed my eyes when we got to the Princess Anne and didn't open them until I had arrived at my room. This really helped me cope with my hospital phobia. I took parts of my "baobab tree" with me; my candles, lights and affirmation cards.



They broke my waters. I was dilating incredibly slowly, like 1 cm every 4 hrs to start off with. The hypnobirthing worked beautifully until the syntocinon drip ramped up. They were no longer my contractions. I tried really hard but I couldn't focus. I had to wait hours in pain for Remifentanyl because the gas and air was doing nothing and the anaesthetist was in surgery.

When I eventually got to the pushing stage, which I thought wasn't too bad, it didn't feel this long for me but apparently I was pushing for 3 hours. They only let me carry on because Max was so happy in there the entire time. I started off kneeling up holding onto the back of the bed. That was most comfortable for me until his head was coming. I birthed him the rest of the way lying on my side. On the way out he got his shoulder stuck and then had to be taken for oxygen. I lost quite a bit of blood (almost a litre) and had stitches for a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree tear. I had to stay in hospital 24hrs so they could keep checking on Max. Max was born Thursday 31st May at 5.59am.



So all in all a traumatic time for me, but the hypnobirthing played a crucial part in keeping me feeling in control and keeping my sanity for as long as I managed, so thank you for teaching it to us.

Emma, Jim and Max. Xx

**Footnote from Zana re blood loss:** An almost 1 litre blood-loss might sound like a lot. It is, but it's worth remembering that by the end of pregnancy women have around 1.5 litres more blood than they had before pregnancy. Clearly, it's best if this isn't all expelled immediately at the time of birth but it will come out over the next few weeks as women bleed after having a baby. In the UK a blood loss at the time of birth of up to 500ml is said to be "normal". In parts of mainland Europe (eg France) it is said that anything up to 1 litre loss at the time of birth is "normal". Although obviously a blood loss of 500ml or a litre is likely to look and feel alarming, it is very rarely dangerous.