AIMS For a better birth...

Peace at home

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Becki Caig shares her home water birth story

This was my second pregnancy. I had planned a home water birth with my first baby five years ago but I ended up being induced at 41+6 and so my daughter arrived in hospital. Her birth was fairly straightforward but it wasn't quite what I had planned, so this time I was really hoping to get my home water birth.

I had done a bit more research and had made the decision to decline induction just for being 'overdue', especially as I was less sure of my dates this time and the official due date had been brought forward after my 20-week scan. I had been getting Braxton Hicks contractions from around 34/35 weeks which were getting stronger and more regular as the weeks went on. From around 38 weeks I was feeling a lot of downward pressure and had started to get lower back ache so I knew that my body and the baby were getting ready for the big day.

At exactly 42 weeks I woke at 4.30am and thought I felt a contraction. A few minutes later another one came, so I decided to get up and get moving around to see if this was really it. I made myself a drink and sat on my birthing ball and tried to watch a bit of TV. By 5.30am I had to wake my husband, Shaun, as the contractions were getting painful and were already only a few minutes apart. We called labour ward and they contacted the midwife on call who rang us back to let us know that she was about 40 minutes away. Shaun got the birth pool blown up and started filling it while I tried to find a comfortable position for getting through the, now all-consuming, contractions. We had taken a hypnobirthing course so I was concentrating on my breathing and trying to stay relaxed.

The kids woke up about 7ish, just as the two midwives arrived, and my five-year-old nervously popped her head round the door to see what was going on. As much as I had tried to prepare her for the birth she really wasn't comfortable staying in the room with me so she went with Granny and her younger brother to get some breakfast, although she did keep popping in every now and then to check on me! I was getting to the stage where I really needed to get in the pool but it wasn't quite ready so the midwives asked if they could do an examination and check the baby's heart rate. They happily announced that I was 7-8cm which was good news! Then the pool was ready so I got in the lovely warm water and immediately felt so much better - I hadn't believed that the water could give such pain relief but it really did! I hadn't been in the pool long before I felt the urge to push and our baby arrived at 8.11am after only five or six pushes. I brought the baby up to me and had a quick peek to see what the sex was - it was a boy! Shaun then got in the pool with me and we both just sat and stared at our teeny new baby while waiting for the

umbilical cord to stop pulsating.

Having our baby at home was such an amazing experience, we were both more comfortable and I felt so much more in control. The midwives were great, they supported me exactly how I had requested in my birth plan. Looking back now, I am so happy that I got the birth experience I had been hoping for and I feel so empowered - our bodies and our babies are well and truly amazing and we should trust them to do what they're designed to do.

Our little boy weighed in at 9lb 3oz and we named him Joseph Daniel. He's absolutely beautiful!