

Sal's Story

Hello

Our daughter Emily Grace was born on May 23rd 2006 after a terrible trauma. We already have a wonderful son, Dan, who was born by EMCS in 2002. This time I was happy to hear that there was no reason why I couldn't have a normal vaginal delivery.

I was due on May 10th and at 13 days overdue I went to see my consultant to booked me in for an induction the following day. Luckily my contractions started on their own that evening and I went into hospital around 1am on 23rd May. I was 3cm dilated and I was put on the ward until I felt I needed some pain relief. The contractions were regular but bearable. By about 5am they were coming thick and fast and I was transferred back to the delivery suite and started on the gas and air - had an examination and was 5cm. Hubby arrived at around 8.30am and then everything tailed off for an hour or so until around 10.30 when I was asking for an epidural - the pain was unbelievable!

So an angel arrived in the form of an anesthetist and my epidural was in place by around 11am. I was examined again and was 8cm by this point. The epidural didn't completely work and I had incredible pain in my lower back and bum - although I couldn't feel anything else thank goodness! I was getting really tired by this time and the midwife broke my waters to speed things up. There was meconium in the waters but nobody was surprised as the baby was so late.

By 3.30pm I felt like I was ready to push and the midwife told me I was 10cm and I could start! YAY..... . I plugged away for 3 hours and although they could see the head, it didn't seem to be moving down with every push. At 6pm the consultant came in and said that although the baby was happy enough (I was constantly monitored), they were going to give me 30 more minutes then I would be taken down to theatre for a trial of ventouse and EMCS if this failed. I was so knackered by then I agreed. SO of course - nothing happened and I was taken down to theatre after an epidural top up.

So with DH by my side throughout I was put in the stirrups and the ventouse was set up. They were just about to put the cap on my baby's head when my uterus ruptured and she disappeared back up inside my abdominal cavity. All Emily's life support, cord placenta etc shut down. My old C section scar opened and then tore down the left hand side into the birth canal. The surgeons immediately performed a c section and they lifted her out. It had been 6 minutes since the rupture and Emily had been 6 minutes without oxygen. She was 8lb 4oz

She was immediately taken away - no crying and they started resus. The surgeons then set about trying to sort out my injuries. I lost 5 units of blood and they said to me that if they couldn't control the bleeding in five minutes they would have to take my uterus and perform a hysterectomy. I was slipping in and out of consciousness - if it wasn't for my hubby being there I could have quite easily gone to sleep. Thankfully the expert team managed to stop the bleeding and I was transferred to intensive care - all without knowing what was happening to my little girl.

Little did I know they were working on her for so long. She was 17 minutes without a heartbeat and was put on a ventilator with all sorts of drips and tubes coming out of her. They came to see me in intensive care and told me that it was very serious and the next few hours would be critical for both of us.

I drifted in and out of sleep until the early hours when they came to tell me that Em had pulled the respirator off herself but was very poorly and they had to give her morphine - she was in that much pain.

I spent 10 days in hospital and Emily spent 3 weeks in special care. We are both now home but we have been warned that Em may suffer after effects throughout her life. She had an MRI scan which showed a few areas of damage due to lack of oxygen - but nobody knows if that will be significant to her development until she grows. Of course we are hoping that she will be able to compensate but whatever the outcome - she is a beautiful little girl who is as strong and determined as her Mum.

I received excellent care before, during and after the birth. My GP set up some counselling as I was an emotional mess – which I highly recommend. I suffered from post traumatic stress disorder which now seems to be subsiding, but one bad day with Em can bring it all back quickly.

She is now 13 weeks old, beautiful and smiley, - is doing all the things she should be and all the Drs are very pleased with her. She has a bad case of silent reflux – probably due to the birth – but maybe not.

I focus on the positives every day. Had we not been in theatre already – things could have been so much worse. So a harrowing story all round - but one that needed to be told. We are all warned of the risk of uterine rupture when we ask for a VBAC - but at a percentage of 0.7 you never think it will happen to you. We were both minutes away from not being here today and it is indeed a very real risk.

Hugs
Sal and Emily