

## **Amy's Story**

Earlier this year I was diagnosed with PCOS and was gutted to hear the gynaecologist tell me that I would have to start fertility treatment. However three weeks later, I was pregnant! After a wonderful and very enjoyable pregnancy (with the exception of regular gall bladder attacks) I had a baby in February of this year and after spending hours reading these kinds of birth stories I told myself that I was fully prepared for whatever happened and I could cope with it.

Well...after being overdue for 10 days I was brought in to be induced and had been in and out of labour all week with minor pains lasting a few hours then stopping. After the first try my contractions hit me like a bus and I remember walking up and down the corridor screaming in pain with the TENS turned up full.

This was on the Sunday night I was brought in. By 6am Monday morning I was told I was 3-4 cm and brought into the delivery suite. Gas and air helped - but the pain was too much. I was determined though to do it without any further help. At 10 I was checked again and to my dismay was told I was 4.5 cms. It was going really slowly. I struggled on until after lunch and then had Omnibon - which was rubbish and just made me throw up.

A few hours later I succumbed to Pethidine - which made me even sicker. By the time 7pm came my husband was pleading with me to get an epidural and the women in the labour wards down the corridor were asking the midwives if I was ok. I always promised myself that I wouldn't scream - but it was my only outlet for the pain. Shortly after this I had an epidural which let me sleep for a while. At 11pm I was fully dilated and ready to try pushing. After an hour the baby was only half way down and stuck.

At 2.15am I had an emergency section - 27 hours later. I threw up throughout the operation. I am so happy to have a beautiful red haired baby girl - 10lbs 4oz who is my world, but recovering from the section was horrific - I couldn't sit up myself to feed her and wasn't able to breathe when I stood up. I had to be bathed by someone which I found so humiliating. I had an awful time breastfeeding and then took mastitis which was the last straw and I quit.

The whole experience (apart from the reward of having the most precious thing in my life) has really traumatised me and I find it hard to talk about. I cried for weeks after it and relived the whole thing every Monday I woke up. I really don't want my baby to be an only child but I cannot bear the thought of a repeat of this experience. I think that the trauma was mostly because of the intense pain and fear and wish I had an epidural sooner - but I was so frightened at the thought of having a spinal injection. I would be very frightened at the thought of even having an elective section next time as the experience was so hard to recover from and the spinal was a horrible sensation. I still find it hard to be near the hospital where I had my baby girl and recently had to walk past the maternity buildings which left me upset all day as it brought it all back.