

# Tacoma

Born: October 4, 2003

Time: 7:55 am

Weight 7 lbs 14 oz

This story was written by Tacoma's Mom. My comments are written in blue .

Our first homebirth went wonderful and with no complications, except for the fact that my husband was a bit worried he was going to be catching the baby without any help. I woke up at 12:30 am dreaming I was in labour. However, there were no contractions that I was actually aware of. Things started to progress though and by 2:30 am the contractions were starting to come every 5 minutes, lasting 30 seconds or so.

I wasn't ready to call anyone yet, given that my first labour was 20 hours long and started with contraction 5-6 minutes apart. I decided that perhaps I could use a distraction and decided to watch some TV. We didn't have cable, so, of the five stations we actually got, only one was on the air, City TV. Have you ever seen City TV on a Friday night at 2:30 in the morning? Let's just say it was not exactly what I needed to distract myself!

Since the birth was going to be filmed for the TV documentary show Birth Stories and there was nothing distracting on TV, I figured I should clean the house up a bit. I went upstairs to empty the garbages and my husband asked me what I was up to. "Emptying the garbages of course." "Why?" he asked. "I'm in labour", I informed him. "Oh" he said, and quickly nodded back to sleep. I finished cleaning up and decided to take a shower. Things were intensifying, but the contractions still were only 20-30 seconds long. After showering I decided to blow dry my hair so it would look decent for the show, a most important thing during any woman's labour.

It was 5:00 am and I decided I should give people a call. First was my mother in law, who was to be our babysitter. It was very important to me that she be present at the birth of her 11<sup>th</sup> grandchild because she hadn't shared in any of the other grandchildren's births. Next, was my doula Michelle. I told her "Michelle, I'm in labour. I could use some distraction." [I remember her telling me about her choice of television viewing so I rushed over as quickly as possible.](#) The next call was to the director of Birth Stories.

My hubby finally got up and boom...I was in heavy labour. The contractions were still only lasting 45 seconds or so but were 2-3 minutes apart. I told my husband " Please fill up the swimming pool NOW!" We had a little kiddie pool that I really needed. My first birth had been a water birth so I had tons of faith in warm water immersion to relieve my pain. Then I directed, "Time my contractions and get my birth ball." The poor guy never knew what hit him. He must have burned 2000

calories in that short period of time. [Tacoma's Mom is a remarkable woman. She knows what is important and what isn't.](#)

There was only an inch of water in the kiddie pool when I jumped in, holding the hose over my abdomen, using anything to decrease the intensity of the contractions. I started shaking and informed my husband that I was in transition and that this would probably be a good time to call the midwives who were a 50-minute drive away. But, poor guy, I wouldn't allow him to leave my side. This made it quite difficult to get the bedroom ready for the birth. I had a list that was only two pages long for preparing the house.

Michelle arrived to a quiet house until she heard my moaning, and I am a LOUD moaner. [I dropped my bag and ran upstairs.](#) She immediately started applying pressure to my lower back through contractions. I wanted to push, but held back thinking I may not be completely dilated. [She pushed before she was fully dilated during her first birth, which caused her cervix to swell. She really wanted to avoid that this time.](#)

The midwives called back and were very happy to hear Michelle had arrived. They instructed her to call an ambulance if I started pushing. [Hubby was so anxious already I didn't want to tell him what they said. I just reminded mom why she wanted to wait until she was fully dilated to push.](#) Besides, they were only 10 minutes away.

They arrived and I said, as politely as I could in the moment, "CHECK ME!" [This was a very direct demand as I recall, but very understandable.](#) Our midwife put on these super long gloves; I was told later, that went up to her armpits. [These are used for doing exams while in the tub.](#) "You're complete," she told me. I was so happy. I worked with my body to push and push.

Meanwhile, the crew from Birth Stories showed up. [It was very funny because once we found out they had arrived everyone in the room simultaneously fixed their hair. We all laughed at our involuntarily reaction.](#) The director came upstairs, saw me and asked, "Is she pushing?" She yelled down the stairs to her cameraman "GET UP HERE NOW, SHE'S PUSHING!" I actually laughed out loud to her yelling, right in the midst of my pushing. The director was normally a very a quiet and reserved woman, and the thought of her yelling just tickled me.

However pushing was going slowly. I had been pushing for half an hour with not much progress and the midwife had some concerns about shoulder dystocia [meaning the shoulders weren't coming through the pelvis as they should.](#) She asked me to get out of the pool. "No way", I told her. But finally she convinced me to go to

the bed and try a "hands and knees" position. [This is a great position for dislodging shoulders, delivering large babies, and avoiding perineal tears.](#)

After a very long walk, (10 feet is really, really long when you are in the middle of pushing and the baby's head is right down there) and completely dependant on my husband, I finally made it to the bedroom. As we made our slow progress, Michelle made a mad dash for the bedroom to put the shower curtain on the bed to protect the mattress and I had to wait momentarily for her and my husband to finish making the bed. I got into bed, assumed the hands and knees position and within a few minutes I felt my baby crowning. You forget how accurate "ring of fire" describes the sensation. My midwife instructed me to slowly let myself stretch.

Michelle told me to look at my son and mother in law. They were smiling from ear to ear watching the whole thing. My midwife said, "The head is out. Oh no, one more push for the chin, another push for the chin, another one...okay now the shoulders", and my baby was out at 7:55 am.

The baby was placed right under me and I saw my beautiful little baby boy for the first time. There is nothing more gorgeous in the world. He has some brown hair, weighs 7 lbs 14 oz and is beautiful.

Within five minutes I pushed out the placenta and my son cut the cord-so much for letting the cord pulsate for as long as I had hoped.

I looked around and all the sudden became aware of all the people... Michelle, my husband, my son, my mother in law, my two midwives, a student midwife and the three person crew from Birth Stories-all in my little room. They had all shared in this wonderful event. I also looked around the room and saw it was an absolute disaster-so much for cleaning before the birth!

My only disappointment was that I had a small tear that needed stitching, and after all that perineal massage and kegel exercises. But I couldn't complain. Everything had gone so well, and everyone made it; Birth Stories and my mother in law only 20 minutes before the birth. Afterwards Michelle held my hand during the stitching and I realized how important a doula is for after the birth when hubby is busy with baby.

Having a homebirth was so wonderful because I was able to take a bath in our own tub and relax in our own bed right after the birth. My mother in law prepared us a sumptuous meal to feed everyone. My son was the proudest older brother I have ever seen and couldn't keep his hands or lips off Tacoma. We truly enjoyed the newborn period and found it much more relaxing than the first time around.