

# birth stories

Most expectant mothers spend the majority of pregnancy thinking about how and when her baby will enter the world. The nervous excitement and anticipation of child birth leads to day dreaming about different timing and scenarios that may happen. Few moms are able to predict precisely how the actual birth will play out, and those details are what make each mom's birth story unique. In celebration of birth and renewal this holiday season, MOM readers share with us their birth stories.



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## Suzanne's story

### Expect the unexpected

Driving to the hospital the morning of Pierce's birth was a ride I will never forget. I elected to have a primary cesarean section due to having many abdominal surgeries associated with Crohn's disease, and I remember feeling excited to meet the baby, but scared about what the "new normal" would be for my husband and me. I walked myself into the operating room, hopped on the table and told my co-workers, "Let's do this!" At the time, I was a labor and delivery nurse at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center, specializing in nursery nursing. I was so happy to know I was in the best hands if any unexpected circumstance would arise during delivery due to my condition. I was mentally prepared for something happening to me - possibly additional surgery due to my Crohn's or an immediate flare up after the birth - but not for what actually happened.

I felt no pain, just minor tugging without any discomfort during the procedure. Dr. Julie Haugen showed us our baby, and my husband announced, "It's a boy!" Our baby was beautiful with light brown curly hair and dimples. Pierce took his first breath, but then struggled to take the next one. It was evident to me that something was wrong. I was flooded with emotion when I saw Pierce being whisked out quickly to the nursery warmer. The OR became quiet, the environment grew stressful, and I could feel my ears filling up with tears. I didn't expect



the staff to come back into the OR and tell me Pierce needed to be transported to the NICU at Riverbend Medical Center to receive additional care due to having a bilateral pneumothorax. A pneumothorax occurs when the tiny air sacs (alveoli) in a baby's lung burst, leaking air into the space between the lung and chest wall (pleural space). This meant that Pierce would need to be under a breathing machine and given medicine so his lungs could expand more easily. I was heartbroken, but determined to help make my precious baby better.

Later I was transported to Riverbend Medical Center where I was reunited with Pierce. The NICU nurse was kind enough to let me hold him after what felt like the longest day of my life. Pierce was a small six

pounds and had tubes everywhere. I wanted to just hold him so tightly but all I could do was cry and put my head on his forehead.

Four days later after many talks with the physicians and nurses, all-day and all-night visits to the NICU, feeding sessions every two hours to keep his blood sugars up and being Pierce's advocate, we brought him home.

Although I didn't get the birth experience I wanted, it turned out to be the best thing that has happened to me. I was given world's best gift—motherhood.

*Suzanne Squires is the lucky mom to Pierce, and is currently a nurse at Pacific Women's Center.*

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Anita Rojas, LDM, CPM  
Erin Lusk, LDM, CPM

## Shannon's story

### A home birth

Skyler Canyon Rose was due to arrive on Christmas day. Each moment beyond that day slowly passed while skin stretched and the anticipation seemed to eat away at my brain. I wanted more than anything just to see that face and feel the victory of my body's ability to naturally birth a child without drugs. At the age of 21, I felt that my body was made to give birth. This was my calling, to be a natural mother.

At seven days overdue I started to feel a glimmer of discouragement. My certified midwife wanted me to get out of the house and attend the First Night Eugene parade. I dressed up and hit the streets on New Year's Eve. I felt free to walk, dance and move that night. I let my mind go and even forgot I was pregnant for a while. I began to relax.

A few hours after dark, I waddled back home to report to my family how much fun



I had. With renewed spirit, I used the bathroom and headed to bed. That is when the labor began, fast and furious. Contractions hit my body like hail on a metal rooftop. I began to feel outside of my body. Eyes closed, I kept my focus in. Before I knew it, my midwife was saying I could push.

The back labor consumed my every movement. I couldn't even find comfort, let alone push. I felt like I was in an elevator during an earthquake and I was trapped with no control over my muscles. I continued to push on what felt like a brick wall inside me. I knew the only way to find relief was to get that baby out.

Suddenly, I heard cheering from neighboring houses. I listened closely to make the words out, and realized they were shouting "Happy New Year!" I remember thinking "how rude!" They were

all out there partying and I was inside pushing. Filled with anger, I began to bear down hard. Skylar was born into my loving arms at home on January 1 after 19 ½ hours of labor.

*Shannon Arm is the busy mom to Skyler, 15, Lilah Rose, four and Jayden, 10 (pictured above), and owner of Bambini in Eugene.*

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