

# 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.





## Liberty's story

### At the birth center

Liberty was interested in using a birth center or having a home birth after having four hospital births. Liberty's other pregnancies and births had gone well, but she wanted a more relaxed birth without a hospital stay. She wanted her two older children to have the option to see their baby brother born and she didn't want to be restricted to a bed during labor. As her pregnancy progressed, she and her husband Mike liked that they were partners in her care and had a relationship with their birth team at the Growing Family Birth Center.

Liberty had a prenatal visit April 28 in the early afternoon, and later that day she started having contractions. She went swimming that evening, then around 10 p.m. her water broke and Liberty called the birth center. By 11:30 p.m. she was at the birth center with her husband, two oldest children and a friend who came to help. Her contractions were eight minutes apart and lasting 60-70 seconds. They settled into their room and went to bed to try to rest for the work ahead. By 3:30 a.m. Liberty was ready to get into the birth tub. Mike got in with her, and they labored together in the dimly lit room. Throughout the morning Liberty altered her activities between resting, walking, sitting on a birth ball and being in the tub. She asked to be checked at noon and was dilated to seven centimeters. Lathan was born April 29 at 3:35 p.m. gently into the water.

Liberty spent at least an hour skin-to-skin with her newborn before he was examined—this helps with bonding and establishing nursing. Mike and Liberty were served a candle light dinner for two, then they chose to go home that night to sleep in their own bed.

*Liberty is the lucky mom to five beautiful children, and looks forward to having another baby at home or at the birth center.*

## Kelly's story



### At Good Samaritan Hospital

Ever since I was a little girl I dreamed of becoming a mother. I just knew it was the most amazing gift in the world and I could not wait to experience it. When my husband and I found out we were expecting we were overjoyed. I still remember hearing the baby's heartbeat for the first time and realizing it was really happening. I was amazed at the amount of love my husband and I suddenly felt for this little person. How can you have so much love for someone you have never met?

I woke up the morning I went into labor with this sense it was going to be the day. When my water broke I was at home with my husband and my mother who helped keep me calm and relaxed. They even kept me laughing in the car through my contractions on the way to the hospital. I remember feeling so many things at once. Most of all feeling happy and excited for the day I had been waiting for and realizing I was about to meet this little guy I had been talking to for nine months.

I was so lucky to have a midwife and nurses I felt comfortable with and who explained everything they were doing. They were so supportive and encouraging and made me feel very at ease. At the last minute I decided I wanted to use a mirror and I was so glad I did. Seeing his head come out further with each push gave me the extra strength and motivation I needed. The moment he came out and I held him was the most incredible moment of my life. I could not believe I was finally holding this little person I had been dreaming about for so long.

*Kelly Locey is a new mom to Brady, born September 21.*



## Rebecca's story

### A home water birth

I always knew I would have my babies at home. I watched all my younger siblings be born at home; it seemed so natural and right. When I discovered I was expecting, I wanted a home birth but my husband was in the Marines and we were living in California, so I didn't know how it would work out. I started prenatal care at the Naval Hospital. During my first prenatal visit, I was lied to by the doctor, pressured into tests and informed they had their own methods regardless of my plans. After crying to my husband, I called my mother (who is a midwife) to start planning a home birth. I continued getting prenatal care with the doctor but didn't tell him of my secret plan. A month before my due date my husband was deployed to Iraq and I moved home to Oregon.

My home birth plans were in place and the birth tub set up in my apartment a week before the baby was due. On the morning of my due date, I started having contractions. My mother-in-law came to keep me company and we did a lot of walking. I talked to my husband several times that day on the phone; we were very excited. In the afternoon my mother/midwife came with her assistant. They set up the birth supplies and I spent the time between contractions walking up and down the stairs, taking showers, watching movies and working on the birth announcements. The most important women in my life were there

to support me: my mother, two sisters, best friend/sister-in-law and my mother-in-law.

When my labor became more serious, I decided to get into the birth tub. I couldn't believe how much easier my labor was in the water. The encouragement I received from all present empowered me to keep going. The moment of my son's birth was the hardest yet most profound event in my life. It will forever be one of my most perfect memories. Perfect because it was in my own home where I felt comfortable and safe, surrounded by people I know and my baby never left my side.

*Rebecca Emmons is the oldest of eight. She now has three children, all born at home in water.*



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