

Finding out our baby was breech.

At my 36 week appointment one of my midwives, Katie, felt my stomach and said that she thought our baby was in the breech position. She said I should go get an ultrasound to check. Jared and I went in that week for an ultra sound and they confirmed that our baby was in the frank breech position. The ultrasound tech said my fluid was a little low as well. This all came as a total shock because everything had been going so smoothly my whole pregnancy. After we found this out we tried everything we could to get the baby to turn over. I tried lying with my hips elevated, chiropractic appointments, acupuncture, moxa (a Chinese herb that stimulates fetal movement), swimming, and handstands in the pool. Finally at 37 weeks I tried an external version. I remember one night I was lying with my hips up, I had an ice pack on the top of my stomach and a heating pad on the bottom of my stomach, Jared was burning moxa on my toes and talking to the baby about turning! We started laughing at ourselves because we felt like we had really gone over to the crazy side! After all our efforts the baby still did not turn. I was feeling defeated and feeling like my dreams of a home birth were slipping away. Luckily for us the sanctuary birthing center also works with an OB named Dr. Fischbein that specializes in selective breech deliveries, so we started going to him to monitor my fluid levels and the baby's positioning. I went to him twice a week for non stress tests and he told me that I should be resting. He talked to Jared and I about the risks and benefits of a c-section and a selective vaginal breech birth. He went over his criteria that the baby would have to meet in order to be a candidate for a vaginal delivery. He told us that our baby met the criteria and would be a good candidate for a breech delivery. At first I was unsure of what to do. I looked at birth stories online and I talked to some women who had delivered their baby's in the breech position. It was really a turning point for me when I talked to them because it inspired me and I felt like it was possible for me too. We went to our last child birth preparation class with our teacher Kimberly and she didn't tell us what to do but she said you should never make any decision out of fear. Sometimes it seems like people are placed in your life to say the right thing at the right time to you. This was one of those cases. It was exactly what we needed to hear. The only reason I would have had a c-section would have been out of fear. Instead I decided to trust my body and in the OB and Midwives care. After this I felt like I came to peace with my baby being in the breech position and felt positive and optimistic about my home birth.

## Birth

Jared and I decided to go ahead with the home birth and at my 38 week appointment I told Molly, my midwife, that I just wanted to go into labor. She checked me and said I was almost a centimeter dilated and my cervix was soft so she stripped my membranes and gave me some tips on inducing labor. That night, the first day of my 38th week, I drank some red raspberry leaf tea and I started having contractions that were noticeable enough to wake me up every 7min from 2:30 in the morning until around 6 in the morning. I remember thinking this was a terrible idea. Why did I want to go into labor! That morning I had an appointment with my OB Dr. Fischbein for a non stress test and to check positioning. I had been going in for non stress tests since my 37th week because my fluid level was a little low and the Dr. wanted to keep checking the baby. When I went to the bathroom that morning I realized I had lost some of my mucus plug and had the "bloody show" that I had heard about. I told the doctor and he didn't seem too worried. By

then my contractions had slowed down and were more spaced out and random. Over the next few days I had random contractions that were sometimes as close at 10 minutes apart but not consistent. On Sunday I went to the mothers day brunch at church and then came home and ate some spicy food for lunch. Jared and I took a nap and around 6pm I started having strong contractions that were anywhere from 1-3 minutes apart and lasting anywhere from 40 seconds to a minute and a half. This went on for an hour while Jared was keeping track of the contractions. I thought maybe it was false labor because I thought the contractions had to be more consistent on the timing but because it was so intense I told Jared to call the midwives and see what they thought. They said that sometimes with breech babies the contractions can vary like that so they said they were on their way over. Molly, Dr. Fischbein and the midwife in training Heather Ann arrived around 8. By then I was totally focused on my contractions. It was hard to keep my cool through the contractions because they had been coming so close together for a few hours and it felt like I didn't have much time to regroup in between. When Molly checked me I was 3 centimeters dilated. A little after they got there I threw up the spicy sausages that I had had for lunch! It was so gross. I was trying different positions though the contractions. I knelt next to the bed, I tried sitting on my birthing ball, being on hands and knees, and sitting on the toilet. I even tried taking a shower which I only did for one contraction because it didn't feel good. I probably spent the most time kneeling and leaning on the bed. Sitting on the ball was really intense. Jared was so amazing though the whole night. He put counter pressure on my hips though contractions, he held my hand, and let me lean on him. Over the next few hours I went to 6 centimeters, and then 7, and around midnight I was 8 centimeters. The midwives were reminding me to eat watermelon and apple and to drink water whenever I could. When I got to 6 they said I could get in the birthing pool if I wanted. I was so excited and looking forward to some relief. Unfortunately for me it didn't feel that good. The water temp was 100 degrees but it didn't feel warm enough to me for some reason. I couldn't figure out how to get comfortable. The contractions were so strong and I started breathing faster and faster. I started feeling tingly in my arms, then my body, and even my face. I told Dr. Fischbein and he said I was hyperventilating and told me to slow down my breathing. I remember when he said that I thought to myself, "I've got to get it together". I didn't want to fail because of something in my control. So I forced myself to breath slower and more controlled and it actually helped with the pain and helped me to calm down. Dr. Fischbein decided to break my water. At this point I was still in the birthing tub and I don't think my water really broke. Over the next few hours my contractions slowed down some and I didn't progress more than 8 centimeters. Then Molly said maybe I should try to walk up and down the stairs. So at around 4:30 in the morning Jared helped me walk up and down the stairs and I threw up again at this point. By the morning I was still at 8 centimeters and Dr. Fischbein started making calls to Tarzana hospital to set up a back up plan. This was the most discouraging part. I did not want to get a c-section after all this labor! Molly told me to try some lunges though my contractions. Heather Ann and Molly helped me do this and it was probably the most painful part of the whole experience. Molly gave me some homeopathic herbs and did put a cloth around my hips and helped me do this shimmy thing. She then told me to squat during some contractions. I remember thinking they were so mean for having me do this but I'm so glad they did because when I squatted though a contraction my water finally broke (for real this time). After this I progressed to 10 centimeters and I was still

squatting and I remember telling Jared I felt like I could push. Dr. Fischbein came in and I pushed through a few contractions in the squatting position. The Dr. saw the baby coming down and his butt was coming out a little. This part of the pushing seemed like it took the longest because the baby would come out a little and then go back in a little. Jared was holding me up but my legs were getting really shaky so the Dr. said I should try moving to the bed for a sitting up squat. Jared sat behind me and held me up while Molly and Heather Ann helped me hold my legs back as I pushed. Once the baby's legs were half way out it seemed like it went really fast. I remember seeing Dr. Fischbein rotate the baby and then the baby came out. The Dr. said he fish hooked the baby to bring the head down but I don't even remember that because it all happened so fast. I remember Molly saying that I didn't tear at all. They put our baby on my chest and I remember Drew's eyes were wide open and he cried almost right away. It was the most surreal experience of my life. Jared and I both cried and were in total shock that it really happened. I remember thinking I couldn't believe he was inside of me. He looked so perfect in every way. He was born at 10:23 in the morning, 7 pounds 15 ounces and 19 ½ inches long. He was 10 days early. He nursed a little after a few minutes and after the cord stopped pulsating Jared cut it. I delivered my placenta and the midwives cleaned everything up. I just laid there with my little boy for like an hour. It was such an amazing bonding moment for me Jared and the baby. I'll never forget it and it was so nice to not be rushed and just get to enjoy everything. After a little while I took a shower and they weighed and measured the baby. They checked him and everything was great. He did have some bruising on his bum and because it was the first to come out his balls were also very swollen...poor guy. The Dr. said it would be fine though and in a few days you would have never known they were ever swollen. It was so crazy when Molly, Dr. Fischbein, and Heather Ann left because it was just me Jared and Drew in bed and we all just took a nap together for a few hours. After we woke up we called our families but it was so wonderful to have had that time together, just the three of us. After all the craziness everything worked out so perfect and we couldn't be happier with our little guy. He is so sweet and mellow and he makes the cutest faces that just make me melt. He's my little cuddle buddy and I'm so happy he's here.