

Surprise baby first delivery for paramedics

Thornhill baby makes early appearance

BY JENNIFER BROWN
Staff Writer

They weren't planning on a home birth, but a Thornhill couple welcomed their first child with the help of York Region paramedics last week.

Shocked parents Barbara and Simon (they requested their last names not be used) were originally looking at March 9 as their due date, but son Frederick decided to make an appearance last Thursday, five weeks early.

The excitement began when Barbara discovered her water had broken at 7:20 a.m. and, although she wasn't convinced she was in labour, decided she should call 911.

Then Barbara discovered her water had broken while she was in the bathroom.

"I tried to stand up and I realized he was coming out," recalled Barbara.

Ten minutes later, York Region Emergency Services paramedics Russell Crocker and Amanda Walker got a call from Barbara, who had first tried to call her doctor's office, getting only an answering machine.

For Walker, who has only been on the job since the ambulance service switched over to regional control Jan. 1, it would be her first delivery as a paramedic.

"I basically assisted," she said.

Crocker and Walker arrived to find Barbara in full labour with little time to spare.

"I was hearing my friends say how painful it would be and all the pushing, but it seems like just one minute to me and no pain."

"Mom was walking toward us and was displaying some of the symptoms of birth — complaining of lower back pain. I asked my partner to examine her and initially there was nothing and I thought we'd have time. I encouraged her not to push. But shortly after, we checked again and the head was out," recalled Crocker.

Meanwhile, dad-to-be Simon was still asleep, unaware his son was about to be born. But he did awake in time to see baby Frederick, weighing just under five pounds, enter the world about 20 minutes later.

"They were planning to get me to hospital but realized I wasn't going to make it," said Barbara, who was surprised to find her experience wasn't at all like the stories she had heard from other women.

"It was so very quick — I was hearing my friends say how painful it would be and all the pushing, but it seems like just one minute to me and no pain — well, a little bit."

Both Barbara and Simon say they are still overwhelmed by the experience.

"I was stunned. I was so glad he was crying because I was worried a little and I still don't feel ready yet and a bit scared too," said Simon.

The couple say they are grateful for the support of the EMS paramedics.

"They did a great job — without them I don't know what I would have done. I didn't go to prenatal classes, so I didn't know what to expect. Before my water broke, I honestly felt like I was just going through my normal morning routine of going to the bathroom."

For Walker, it was great on-the-job training, although she credits Crocker with taking charge of the situation.

Crocker, who has delivered just two other babies in his career as a paramedic, said he had received pediatric training last year, which came in handy during the delivery.

"And after a hectic week, it was a rewarding experience for all involved."

"It had been a rough day the day before, so it was a nice way to start Thursday," he said.



Barbara and Simon of Thornhill had their son Frederick with the help of EMS team Amanda Walker and Russell Crocker.

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