Real Birth Stories (No Sugarcoating) Transcript

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Hormone Heroines Intro

Everyone talks about how painful contractions are or how painfully the ring of fire is, and I would say they're not even comparable to fixing that cervical lift without any pain management.

What had to happen is… my midwife had to put her hand up there, press the cervical lip out of the way during a contraction while I was pushing as hard as I could to reduce it.

She was able to produce it that way, but it wouldn't stay because lucky me, the head kept going because the had kept Do you feel like your hormones have turned against you?

Trust us, you're not alone. We're Dr. Serena and Dr Heidi. And on Hormone Heroines, we explore all the root causes that are behind hormone imbalances and we teach you how to thrive through them.

Join us for real talk, expert tips, and even a few laughs. Hi. So this week on hormone heroines we thought it would be fun to talk about birth stories because I am almost 37 weeks pregnant.

Heidi's First Birth Story

getting really close to the finish line and so why don't you start with your first birth? Okay so my first berth was 23 and a half years ago. I was five weeks early I went into labor on a Sunday.

It was Mother's Day. Thank you, Morgan. I love you. Okay, this is going to sound really weird, but my brother and I used to be really close, and we used watch all of the Star Wars midnight showings when they first came out.

So for my birthday, because my birth day was the week before, He had bought me tickets to go see the new like whatever the one was like yeah episode one I think so it's like well I'm not gonna have this baby yet I want to Go to that movie and I don't want To have a baby with me at that moving you know all this whatever I was I Was also 23 and I was in early labor, so I had contractions, but they were about 10 to 15 minutes apart.

They would calm down when I would rest, and then they would start back up when i would go back to work and if I got stressed or anything like that. The closest they got probably that Tuesday was right around, you know, five to six minutes apart.

But then as long as I would sit down and calm down, they would space back out, but they didn't space out completely. And how long were you in that early labor phase for?

So I went into labor on Mother's Day and I had her on a Thursday. So, I was in labor for the four days. Wednesday night comes and that's the midnight showing of the movie.

I am very stubborn and… I stood in the line and we were going to watch that movie and then we finally got in to sit down and my brother's friend who was sitting next to me was timing the contractions for me and he's like, You know, Heidi, I think it's probably time for you to go to the hospital.

They're like three minutes apart. And I was at that point very uncomfortable and they had just rolled the credits, you know the words that come up and the song and yeah, from Star Wars.

We had made it through the hour long of fricking ads. But I was in so much pain and I started to feel like her head was coming out. It wasn't. Just all the pressure there.

I called my other friend and she came and got me and we drove to the hospital. And I had her at 9.13 in the

morning. I did do it naturally, the epidural I didn't end up getting.

So I was in labor for that basically five days and had her in the morning on that Thursday. It was a very long labor. Was very hard, but it was wonderful afterwards.

I had been in so much pain that when I first started pushing, they told me to slow down, um, But it hurt really bad. Like I got the ring of fire. And I was like, no, this hurts and I want it over with.

So I did push very hard and i pushed her out in 13 minutes. And subsequently I had 13 stitches, which I thought was kind of funny. Basically a stitch for every minute I went too fast.

She was my first baby so there was no stretch give anything like that. And I was actually able to pull her out of me. So my doctor knew that I wanted to have her on me, I also had my grandpa.

My grandpa was my person growing up, but I had laid that on. And then the doctor let me pull, her, out, of, me and put her. On me so I, was the first person she touched.

and then she laid on my grandma's shirt. so that was like really, really special. After that, I was just euphoric. I had so much oxytocin going through me that I didn't feel them stitching me up.

They told me to pass my placenta and I basically coughed it out. And then I went home the very next day. Okay. Well, let's talk about a few of the differences in your labor that I feel like some people might not be familiar with unless they've gone through.

So the fact that you were in labor for days, Let's just kind of talk that on like the medical aspect. I felt like a lot of women don't know that. You can be in Labor for Days or that your cervix can dilate and prime itself days and weeks before.

Sometime months. Yeah. And it doesn't necessarily It's not a good predictor of labor, to be honest. Unless it's like, you know, five to six centimeters, then it is a pretty good indicator.

Because was that the one where you were like four centimeters dilated? I was three centimeters diolated for about a month and a half before I had her, which I supposed to have been on bed rest, but I did not have a choice.

I just had to work. So you listen really well. It wasn't that I wasn' t listening. I loved my doctor. His name was Dr. Little, by the way. He's a sweetheart.

But I was a single mom at that point. Broke up with my fiancee after I told him I'm pregnant. And so I had to work. Like I have to pay rent. Have a place for us to live.

Had to have food. Buy her diapers and clothes and everything. So I could not go on bed rest. That's probably why I went into labor. So when you say that you were in labor for several days, it's that early stages of labor where a lot of times doctors will tell you, if you can't ignore it, ignore, or if start to rest and it goes away, then you don't need to come into the hospital.

They dont start considering you an active laborer until you start having more regular contractions that are getting stronger. And one of the best internal ways to know when that is, is when I cannot ignore these anymore.

Or you cannot talk through them anymore, or if you can go back to sleep with them, then that's probably not an active labor. But if he really cannot go sleep, Then you're probably an act of labor and well, let's talk about also the fact that they said you were going too fast and the tearing, how you try and prevent tearing a little bit.

Yes. So I will tell you, it's very hard because you feel the urge to push. It is very to stop yourself from feeling that urge. To push it can be done.

I just was again, young and dumb and it hurts. Why I wanted it over with. so what they can do is there are oils that you can use, you know, like olive oil or just even like lubricants that they'll use at the hospital.

Um, and basically they'll kind of prime the tissue around where the baby's head is coming out and kind. It's not a massage, but it's like a perineal massage.

But a lot of supporting, it a pressure supporting the issue around the head. You're just trying to have the had come out slowly without really heavy pushing in less needed based off heart rates and all that stuff to allow the perinium to stretch more slowly.

So you're less likely to When you push really hard and push the baby out really fast, that's when you tend to get more of those really big tears that can go all the way to your anus.

Which is what mine did. But to be honest, That hurt less than the pushing in and of itself. Yes, I do not advise to do that because it did take a lot longer to heal.

Luckily, with that birth, I was fine. It was very superficial, no muscular tears or anything like that. Thank goodness. I guess I'm just young and stretchy.

Well, the other thing that I always curious about is, do you feel like the fact that you didn't have the support system that we all hope to have, and do feel that impacted your recovery at all?

No, I lived with my best friend at the time. And so she was kind of like my partner. It was actually kind nice because there was no need to worry about romantic relationships at that time and I could just focus on me and my baby.

I healed pretty well. I had packed my birth bag and like a cute outfit that I wanted to wear because I was like, I'm going to be not pregnant anymore and i can finally wear cute clothes again.

And we actually left the hospital and went to my brother's best friend's graduation party. And his mom gave me some peas to sit on. Cause when you are pushing that fast, or when are you pushing out a baby, whether it's fast or not, hemorrhoids are a huge thing.

Labor, Tearing, and Recovery Tips

Never had a hemorhoid in my life until I pushed her out. That actually hurt worse than healing from the stitches. The stitches were itchy for sure, like when they started healing, but it was, the pain of the hemorrhoid was the worst part.

Um, so I was probably like 30 hours postpartum when we were at a party and his mom gave me a piece to sit on because it. Throbbing and everything. Yeah.

Which again, we don't recommend. We do not recommend doing that. You should go home and rest. Yes. Don't do it. Luckily, don' do what Heidi did in any of these circumstances.

Any of my birth stories don''t do that, but luckily, I did not have any long standing repercussions from that one. Okay. Well, lucky for you, you had a 23-year-old body that recovered from all the things that you should not do.

Yes. Please take my story as a cautionary advice. And don't take her getting lucky and not having to pay for those. Yeah, especially if you're older than 23. Okay, so with my first one, I, you know, at this point I have a medical degree.

I've delivered a lot of babies and I was like, well, statistically, maybe your first baby is not going to come till 41 weeks. Yeah. And so even though I know better, I did not prep everything.

Nothing was prepped to be honest. definitely not going before 40 weeks. It's my first baby. I was literally going to

prep all that stuff that weekend, but I delivered my baby on a Friday, just one weekend too early for my plans, which is how labor goes a lot.

Just know whatever you plan is probably not gonna be what's happening. But I did end up having a home birth. was like 37 weeks and six days. My husband travels for work, so he was not in town.

And I was, like, okay, I'm going to go to sleep because I am like super tired and it was really early. Then I get woken up at like 10 p.m. being like man, That hurt.

Yeah. I'm just like in pain, uncomfortable. And just started having like deeper crampy pain and I was like, okay, I want to, try and sleep through this.

So I kept trying to go back to sleep and then I mentioned I cannot sleep this, so I decided that I should probably, just in case this is labor, start to try to prep things and decided to also clean the house because OCD is a real thing.

And I'm like people are coming over. Let me straighten up and sweep the floors first Which is funny because the people were her mom me and the midwife, you know I just was like I'll get my house ready if I was I can't sleep I might as well clean up cuz it kept me up in walking around which is good for When you are getting closer to like active labor being up And walking round helps baby move and gets things situated better So it's not necessarily a bad idea, but it was kind of like on that.

That's how I chose to spend my time Your nesting kicked in. Yeah, my nests kicked and I was like, you should do this now. Tried to get as much stuff ready as possible.

Around that time, I started, honestly, this is like the not so pretty parts of labor. I just started having diarrhea. My body's like you are going to empty everything out right now, that happens a lot.

This time I'm starting to be really nervous. But I start calling people. If I don't remember the order I call it, but I know I called my mom, called tried to like text my midwife and like no one's answering me and so finally I call Heidi because I'm like okay I know she'll wake up she never sleeps through phone calls yeah and I was like um I I pretty sure I am in labor but no ones answering my phonecalls can you come over so I came over luckily my husband did answer shortly after that yeah so he did call me back and i was hey um i know you're out of town right now but i think i might be in labour and he was Are you sure?

Cause tomorrow I have this job that's like, like a million dollar job. And he's, if I miss it, it should really be. I was like. Well, I'm pretty sure, but I'll call you back.

Heidi's coming over and I get back to you. So then I took over the texting with him. Yeah, because at that point I was like definitely inactive labor.

So Heidi takes over all the texting and it's like, yeah, she's in active labor, you need to come home now. Yeah. The funny story is, and I love my midwife, I'm not trying to say anything bad about her, but like something happened with her phone.

We were just calling her like nonstop. Yeah, we called her phone a million times and we had two phones for her. One was her business phone and one was a personal phone because we were students.

We used to precept with her so we have her personal phones too and were calling both of them. Apparently her one phone though was not her own anymore and so around like 6am this guy calls and he's like all mad.

He's just like this is not the midwives phone number. It was kind of hilarious. Yeah, so it gets to be morning and I was like to the point where I'm like, I think am I gonna have to go to hospital?

She wasn't calling me back. What if she was in a car crash? Well, we were making plans. It's getting close. We

might have go the hospital because we don't have any of the medical supplies to do the birth at home.

Luckily, right then, she answers and she does show up within 15 minutes once she gets the phone call. We get the pool going and then I get in the cool.

I will tell you, honest to God, getting in that pool is like, oh my gosh, the contractions were just not that bad after that. Not to downplay anyone's experience, but for me, world's different.

They do say the warm water is a natural epidural to a point. You still feel it, but it definitely is significantly better. But the thing that comes up that is more significant about my birth story besides the funny beginnings is because she was on my sciatica, I leaned forward so much.

Even though I was walking around, and I ended up leaning forward for most of my labor. I really believe that because of that, at a cervical lip, so what that means is it's 10 centimeters open, which is supposed to be, but a little piece- But you've got like a swollen piece, like right here.

Yeah, yeah, just a piece like this down into it so it is not a perfect circle. And if you push while you have a cervical lip the head can drag your uterus out with the baby.

Also can rip your cervix. Rip your cervical, all that stuff. You have to get rid of the cervical lips, was the most painful and exhausting part of everything else.

So like everyone talks about how painful contractions are or how the ring of fire is and I would say they're not even comparable to fixing that cervical lift without any pain management because what had to happen my midwife had to put her hand up there, press the cervical lip out of the way during a contraction while I was pushing as hard as I could to reduce it.

She was able to produce it that way, but it wouldn't stay, because lucky me, the head kept going. So basically, I had reduce the cervical lip, like, what was it, two or three times?

Yep. she basically reduced the Cervical Lip until I got the Head past the Servix. to keep it open so it wouldn't dip down again. And that is what made me want to say, okay, I'm done.

I'll go into the hospital. But at that point, you're not allowed to. It's too late. You're doing this now. Yeah. That is, what I would say is like what broke me.

and I feel like a lot of women have something during their labor that like breaks them. that's like, i can't do this.

Second Birth: Home Labor and Cervical Lip

i feel that that was the moment for me that broke that cervical lip. That being said, I was so exhausted after that and I could not feel my body because of just the sheer exhaustion that I didn't feel the ring of fire.

Didn't even notice it. Had no idea what happened next as I just was trying to focus all of my strength to push the baby out because the exhaustion was just so deep that like I literally could feel no body.

Yeah. So what happened after that is her shoulder was caught on my pelvic bone because… She literally went like this and spread her shoulders. She broad-shouldered me, which babies don't do.

If you've seen delivery… They usually go like and come right up. Yeah, usually the head comes out and then the body like slides out like jello afterwards.

But no, my kid broad shouldered like she's a football player. And if you know her, she still has that personality. Yeah. So her shoulder was caught. It's called a shoulder dystocia.

And so fun fact, I got the head out without tearing from all that beautiful perineal pressure. I'm not pushing too fast, but with her shoulders being caught, then my midwife and you had to have get four hands up in there to get her should off my pelvic bone.

to then get her out and that is what I tore on. Yeah well okay so there is a point where in some births you you might have to crack the clavicle bone um because you have them out within a certain amount of time so it's safer for both mommy and baby.

So I put my hands in and I was trying to get around to her shoulders and my finger slipped and went into her armpit and she went like this and came out.

Yeah. The joke is Heidi tickled her. I tickle her out. She tickles her up. It's fine. Yeah, so then, you know, baby's out and she was a great breastfeeder.

So she immediately started to go for the breast and started nurse. But I was so exhausted, I felt dead. And so I did not have any of the oxytocin rush, euphoria.

You were also bleeding a lot. Yes. Oh, yes. So we did give you pitocin. Yep. Which is why even with Humber, you should have a licensed practitioner who can give your pitotin because it is the life saving so you don't bleed to death.

Part of the reason why we think that happened is because of all the exhaustion, the uterus was too tired to stop the bleeding in cases where you do not need any medical intervention.

The uterus will start to clamp down and shrink and literally clamp off those blood vessels so that they stop bleeding. but my whole body was so fatigued that wasn't happening.

We should talk about that though. After you give birth in the hospital or at home, they do the fundal massage. It does not feel good. It's horrible. You're basically pressing on that uterus to get it to contract back down, get back to it.

And you're pressing hard. A deep tissue massage for your uterus to try and get to start to contact again to clamp back. So that the blood vessels… Yeah.

Part of the reason why you also want baby to nurse right away is because the stimulation of nipples help contribute to contracting the blood vessels and the uterus down.

But like I said, I just think I was too exhausted after that cervical lip. I literally felt dead. It was like watching things happen, but not really being there.

Because of that, didn't have any of euphoria. Yeah. Numbness. That's how I would describe it. Yeah, and I did tear, so I got some sutures. I hated the suture.

They were like the worst part about recovery. Really? Yeah I hate the stitches. Maybe because you didn't have a hemorrhoid. Just saying. Who knows? That was painful.

Because they would burn like when I pee, it would burned and so, I had that. And so that was like always terrified to go to the bathroom afterwards because it was just painful no matter which part was coming out.

Well, that's the other thing, too, is like people don't talk about enough. It's like after you give birth, sometimes it's really hard to pee. Yes, peppermint in the water.

Luckily for me, I was able to go to the bathroom and I didn't have to be catheterized. But if you don' t, if You aren't able To pee after You give Birth, then you have To be Catheterize because they have Empty your bladder.

And they have to make sure that your brain and bladder are back to functioning to be like, yes, you need to pee when you to need pee. Yes, because it just kind of cuts off.

Yeah. It's like no, I don't want to feel anything down there right now. Because the nervous signaling can get messed up and so that's part of recovery.

So that was my labor story. That was fun. I had never watched New Girl before and then we watched a lot of New Yeah, that's what I wanted on. I just like eddled my dogs and watched New Girl while we waited for everyone else to show up.

To answer their phones. Yeah. Anyways, I think in all the deliveries that I've been a part of, what you see on TV where it's just like, oh, and push it out.

And then it like oh everybody's so happy and there's barely any bleeding and they cough out their placenta and then they're just done. We did that one together because I know exactly who you're talking about.

I was like that's the dream birth. Yeah. She was very good at meditating clearly. Yes. And that was her first baby. It was impressive. Anyways, we've talked about your other birth story before on the show.

So you just want to give her synopsis of that one. Well, that when I was in labor for a week and they tried to stop it. I wasn't active labor and I went into labor 10 weeks early.

We were at the park with our older kids and this was 15 and a half years ago now. And I was just feeling really off and I started having contractions.

They're like, what the hell? These are like not Braxton Hicks. Um, I, it was like I drinking water. I wasn't dehydrated. Like I know all the things. And so I.

We just, we need to go to the hospital because something is wrong. So I went to hospital, they admitted me, They put the band on me to check contract.

Oh, you actually are having. Of course I am. I've done this before, I know what a contraction is. So I was there for a week, they had put me on 48 hours of magnesium drip, which is absolutely horrible.

They were trying to calm my uterus so that it would stop contracting and I would not be in labor anymore. It did not work, it actually made my labor worse.

If you've ever had magnesium sulfate drip it is horrible! In small doses? In smaller doses, it's fine. Very calming, feels nice. 48 hours of it is very horrible.

It relaxes all of the muscles in your body, but I couldn't even open my eyes because if I open, my eye would go like this because they were too… Or would shake because the muscle could not contract to hold your focus.

I was vomiting because it made you very nauseous, very achy all over, that body aches were worse than the contractions. So that didn't work, so they finally stopped it.

I was in bed. They tried, you know, everything they tried. So they started pumping me full of steroids for the baby because they knew that the birth was going to be imminent.

The reason they do steroids is to try and mature the lungs. Yes. That way when baby comes out, they will hopefully have the ability to breathe once. It did not work.

She was born without surfactant. And so she was on a CPAP machine for days. Um, after they could not stop it, they, it had slowed down. I was like, I just want out of here.

If I'm going to be in pain and feel like crap, just wanna leave. They're like okay, well you can go home, but you have to come back. And then we went home.

We just started to get dinner going and they called me and said, we just got your labs back, you need to go here right now. Apparently I was bleeding internally.

The placenta was leading, but it wasn't coming out. So we had no clue. And I.

Complications, C-Section, and Recovery

Was in help syndrome. My liver and kidneys were shutting down. We had to go back and then I had an emergency C-section and they took her out and obviously I didn't get to do the euphoria or anything like that because I don't have like a real labor and my uterus was cut open.

Yeah, doesn't have the same hormonal pathways in that circumstance. But the good news is that your daughter is healthy and alive today. And thank goodness for medical intervention.

Yes. Because it does save lives. That being said, she can't tolerate. I'm not a good drug addict, apparently. Yeah. I just went to sleep and it was a great sleep.

It was anything bad until I woke up the last time and my husband was standing over me crying. And I was pissed at him because he was supposed to be with the baby because I told him to go with baby to the NICU because they whisked her away because she had to on a CPAP to breathe.

He was in my room and he's crying and I go, my God, what happened to my baby? Your heart kept stopping because you don't tolerate. Yeah, my heart keeps stopping and I would stop breathing.

And so they had to do CPR and get me back awake and ruined my one good sleep of my life. We went into more detail on that story in one of our previous episodes, so that's just kind of the quick summary.

Anyways, the many things that can happen in labor from a smoother hospital birth to home birth, to more complicated hospitalbirth, you know, whatever.

Even with the same person. It's totally different for every delivery. You never know what's going to happen. We're going get this one all set up. Honestly, because this is my second one, I've been a little less focused on it, to be fair.

I'm going work until my due date, but last time I went early, so statistically I'll probably go early again. However, last I planned on statistics and it bit me in the butt.

Who knows when she's coming out. Now I will probably two weeks late. I don't know. Hopefully not. As far as labor prep goes, I have gotten my stuff together a little bit sooner.

I had part of my birth kit and stuff. So I'm going to pick up the rest on Monday for my homework so I will actually have everything at my house. Yes. Which would be really nice.

Preparing for the Next Birth

Yes, but yeah other things for labor prep I've been drinking raspberry leaf tea because that helps prime the uterus I'm gonna start taking a little bit more calcium and fatty acids and Mostly because yes, fatty acids are great for the brain, calcium is great bone development, but it's also really important for muscle contraction.

And so that if you're getting muscle fatigue, those nutrients are part of that because they're actually, there's like calcium channels that play within contracting muscles.

I'm going to up those a little bit to hopefully my muscles don't get as fatigued. We've also given you iron infusions because you were anemic. Yep. So being really up on my iron.

If you're anemic, you are more likely to have more bleeding afterwards. Just really optimizing nutrition at this point. There's the mild circuit to help with positioning baby.

You're going to start doing some of those things. I already told her she's not allowed to broad shoulder. We already talked to this one about how she's allowed to come out.

See how that goes. It's going to be much easier. But yeah, really as far as labor prep goes for home birth is just about having all your stuff ready to go and nutrition support.

And that's really what I've been doing at this point and being ready change plans if things need to. In summary, there's so many different versions of birth stories out there.

Even for the same person. And I think a lot of women get really attached to their plan and what they wanted for their birth. And, you know, it just so rarely happens that way.

So I, think sharing other people's stories and not feeling guilty for not being able to do the plan that you originally wanted is why we wanted to share these stories.

Yeah. Hope it helps. Bye. You know how us women are always just pushing through it, and then when we go to find help, we're often not taken seriously or told, oh, that's just part of being a woman.

Yeah, We've lived through, prioritizing everybody else, And then our own health falls to the wayside. That's why we started blossoming longevity by women or women.

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