

Baby Diary

The first year of life for children is full of constant development and changes – babies do new things every single day. Realizing this, I decided to make a diary for each of my kids about their first year. I would write in it from time to time to summarize all of their many changes, hoping some day they'll enjoy reading them. I was writing in my son's Baby Diary the other day when it occurred to me that I should share it on my blog; especially since he's been very crabby lately and it's been really difficult for me to write blog posts with him in my arms. He was born on July 11, 2008.

Christopher's Diary:

7/16/08 – went to dr. checkup for your slight jaundice. dr. said everything looked good and you weigh 7 lbs. 11 oz.

7/17/08 – Actually, since it was the 12:01 showing, it's actually the 18th... but your first movie in the theater was the Dark Knight. You barely stirred and did drink a bottle during the movie. You didn't make a peep.

7/19/08 – You attended your first stage play, the Music Man. You were very good, except you pooped early in the show and were crabby and had to be taken out, but only for a few mins. so you could get your diaper changed

7/20/08 – umbilical cord stump falls off – you are 9 days old.

8/11/08 – You had your one month check-up today! Everything looks good; you weigh 9 lbs. 14 oz. and are 22 in. long. Your head circumference is 38.3 cm. You didn't cry at all while getting weighed and measured.

8/13/08 – You smiled at Mommy!

9/3/08 – In the past week, you've started "talking" back to me! You smile really big when I smile at you and give you a big HI, and you smile at me every time you see me when you wake up. When you were born, you could hardly see any lashes, but now your eyelashes are getting long and beautiful! Your eyes are still a bright beautiful blue!

9/5/08 – You laughed for the first time – long and loud. And it was during Daddy's funny play, The Nerd. You laughed at the part where they're playing the 'I'm going on a trip' game. I don't know if you heard the other people laughing or it was just a coincidence, but it was SO cute!

9/12/08 – Today you had your 2 month dr appt. You are 12 lbs 9 oz and 23.25 inches long. Your head circumference is 44.5 cm. You fussed a little as they were examining you, but you didn't cry. The dr said you have dry skin and we have to watch your ears to make sure formula isn't going in there.

9/22/08 – For about a week now, you seem to recognize your bottle. You'll get extra excited when you see it and open your mouth. Your big sister Disney calls you "Beeber". Your big sister Sammie loves to hold you and is always asking questions about newborn babies. She calls them "born" babies.

10/16/08 – You are 3 months old, and you are starting to play with toys. The other day I saw you "discovering" your hands, and ever since you've been grabbing things. You know how to put your fist in your mouth. You're still spitting up a lot. Not as much at a time as Disney did when she was a baby, but many times throughout the day.

11/5/08 – You've been playing with toys for awhile now; you can grab things and you try to draw them into your mouth. You love making g sounds – ga, goo, ggg. You are still a very happy little guy and smile at everyone, making their days!

12/4/08 – Time flies and you are almost 5 months old! Disney used to call you Beeber, and the name stuck, so we call you that sometimes. Disney now calls you Kipper. You've had some crabby days, but most of the time, you're still very smiley. You've been experimenting with vocalizations and you LOVE to stand! You do not bend at the waist! We tried the tot wheels (walker) for the first time the other day, and you like it for short periods of time since you just hang in there – your feet don't touch the floor yet. Most of the time, you're pretty good about sleeping at night, usually waking up only once. But you also have bad nights where you won't let Daddy sleep! You like baths, and you're really starting to like toys. You

play with the busybox on your crib, and try to eat EVERYTHING! You might be teething because you try to gnaw on everything. You've been trying cereal and if your gums seem really sore, Mommy and Daddy have been giving you a treat – a dab of peanut butter on your pacifier. You LOVE it! You found your feet a few weeks ago, and you were trying to get your toes in your mouth. We are excited to take you to see Santa pretty soon!

Our Friend, The Doctor

With 4 kids, many of them small in years, we are at the doctor's office lots. We are so lucky to be really happy with our pediatrician, especially since we see him often. Today was another such visit – time for our 2 year and 4 month check-ups for the little ones.

Disney (2 yrs. old) liked the fishies in the waiting room and the Dora sticker she got at the end but that's about it. She didn't want the doctor near her, she didn't want to be weighed, measured, nor have her heart listened to, and she didn't want to walk in front of the doctor like he asked. Best we could tell during all the kicking and screaming, she is 2 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 25.5 lbs.

On the other hand, Disney's baby brother Christopher seemed to love the doctor's office. Then again, he smiles all the time, so it's hard to tell. He smiled when they measured his head – both times, since the nurse forgot the measurement from the first time (43 cm). He smiled when he was weighed (15 lbs. 6 oz.), and he smiled some more when his length was measured to be 25.5 inches. He's a really good baby – the doctor says he acts more like a 5 month old than a 4 month old because of the

strength in his limbs and how he uses them.

Disney's a great kid also, but she is two years old. And "terrible two's" is not just one of those sayings; it's based on truth. Disney was the sweetest baby and toddler you could imagine... then she turned two. And she's still sweet, she just has a miniscule amount of patience and tolerance for things that don't go her way. She could be chatting happily about doggies one minute, and the next thing I know, she's melted onto the floor into a puddle of two.

But there must be something going on with the body chemistry of two-year-olds. Everyone knows they're like that, and it's not just an unearned bad reputation. If it weren't for the "terrible two's", I think I would want an even larger family – but it's the dreadfulness of the terrible two's that give me pause – only one more bout of terrible twos to battle, if we can survive Disney's, of course!

About This Blog...

For some reason, I was inclined to go to my "About this blog" page today. I knew it would be outdated, but I was still surprised about how wrong it really was, check it out:

This is a blog about my life as a mom of 3, (soon to be 4!), girls. I am the matriarch of a family that includes 2 dogs, a parrot, and kids ages 8, 3 1/2, and 1 1/2, and coming soon, a newborn... Wish me luck!

That was the old original version I slapped up in a hurry way back when I started this blog. In case you're not a regular reader, I should tell you that girl #4 was actually a boy (surprisingly, my doctor has a reputation in town for reading

the ultrasound wrong when it comes to gender – I always thought the circumstances were exaggerated until it happened to us), and so I now have three girls, ages almost 9 years, 4 years, and 2 years old. We also have a little boy who is almost 4 months old. I was right about the needing luck part – 4 kids at one time, especially ones this little (and spoiled!), can be very needy all together and quite a handful. We still have the parrot and the dogs, and they just add to the chaos. It's stressful, but that's my problem, I have to learn to lighten up about some things. Most of the time, I have great fun watching them all interact as the daily chaos unfolds. The little guy loves his sisters!

MiRRors

Hmm, I couldn't figure out how to make one of the R's in [Mirrors](#) backward like they do for the movie title, but anyway, we saw the movie [Mirrors](#) with [Keifer Sutherland](#) yesterday. It was between [Mirrors](#), [Tropic Thunder](#), and [The Rucker](#). We eliminated [The Rucker](#) from the selection because it didn't look or sound very good, and the only reason we were interested in seeing it is because it stars [Rainn Wilson](#), none other than the hilarious character Dwight Shrute on our favorite show, [The Office](#). We ended up going with [Mirrors](#) over [Tropic Thunder](#) because we were at the nice theater, and we figured a horror movie would give us more bang for our buck so to speak – take advantage of the larger screen and the nicer sound.

[Mirrors](#) is kind of lengthy for a horror film; it runs about 2 hours. It didn't drag for me at all, well, maybe a little, but only because baby Christopher decided to poopie during the movie and he needed his diaper changed. So I was like, when

is this going to be over so I can change him because I don't want to miss the movie. It was a cool premise: Keifer Sutherland plays an NYPD cop who accidentally shot and killed another cop, so he still has some psychological bruises and can no longer be a cop. He gets a job as a security guard at an abandoned department store that had had a fire and burned – right up my alley; I really like abandoned buildings, defunct amusement parks, etc. The department store was cool looking, and throughout the movie, there were lots of shots of the outside as well as the inside. I kept wondering if it was an actual building they used for filming or rather a specially built facade... But anyway, the department store is haunted and the haunting ghoul uses mirrors to do its haunting and murdering. There is actually more to the plot, but I don't want to risk spilling any spoilers because it was a decent horror movie and worth seeing. We were alone in the theater, and when my husband left to go to the bathroom, I was pretty creeped out, so I'd say it was spookily successful. Before we saw the movie, I had read that the director, [Alexandre Aja](#), is one of a group of directors a horror movie magazine called, "The Splat Pack" for their affinity for blood and gore. The movie was not without blood and gore, but it was not over-used; something that gets on my nerves with many modern horror films – see #'s 1,2, and 5 on [my movie stinker list](#) – (The Devil's Rejects, Doomsday, and The Fun Park) – all terrible movies showcasing the over-usage of gore.

If you like horror movies, Mirrors is worth a try. We liked it and were entertained, despite it having a few obvious plot holes... but then again, what horror movie doesn't have plot holes?

Back To School And Redirection

Today is the first day back to school (already?!?), and it's really quiet around here. I guess my oldest two are my loudest two, and we have reduced the traffic in the house by 50% since half the kids are now at school during the day. Thank goodness for school; I'm enjoying myself already. So far, I've gotten two loads of laundry done – folded, put away and everything, and I have somehow also found the time today to put away most of the clutter that's been haunting our dining room table for the last week and a half. I even got to work on my e-book a little bit, and it's not even 1 o'clock! And, the kids at school are learning stuff, getting exercise, and socializing with their friends; they're not vegged out in front of the tv or outside fighting in the wading pool. Everyone wins!

While the oldest 2 kids are in school, I also have time to focus on my toddler, Disney, while her baby brother is napping. Today, I got to sit on the floor and play puzzles with her; something we haven't done together in months, almost a year because of my pregnancy and c-section. And she was down for her nap by 12:30, which not only means some quality time together for me and baby Christopher, but also that my toddler should be to bed at a decent hour tonight. Win-win! While I was on the floor playing with my daughter, I was getting up to tend to the laundry and whatnot. My daughter was following me around the house, and this is where my day becomes challenging – trying to keep our clingy almost 2-year-old out of my husband's home office so he can work. The home office isn't a room where he could close the door and utilize the out-of-sight-out-of-mind tactic. The office is on the landing on our second floor, so if my toddler begins to head up the stairs or even *looks* up the stairs, she sees

her best friend, Daddy, and it's over. She tantrums until he holds her, and he can't get any work done. Today she got upstairs and in the clutches of Daddy, so when I chased her down, of course she was upset. But I used one of my favorite child-rearing techniques: redirection. I taught her how to clean the toothpaste off the kids' bathroom counter, which she happily did. We went downstairs for a popsicle, puzzles, and Barney, and all was forgotten. Wow. I had totally forgotten about the magic of the redirection technique because the last 2-year-old I had in the house was our "spirited" child, Samantha. Sammie was **never** re-directable. She has always been so strong-willed that it's literally impossible to re-direct the kid, let alone being able to trick her into helping around the house. To this day, she will fight for her cause, whatever it may be, until she gets what she wants or she passes out. And now that she's older (she's 4), the crying doesn't last as long, but she will remember what it is she wanted and bring it up throughout the day (or week or month) until she gets it. So I am actually *enjoying* Disney's terrible twos a little bit – it's so refreshing to have a kid who listens. I know, she's not yet 2 and things could get worse – so much worse. But I've been there, done that, and after what Sammie put us through, no wonder Disney seems like a breeze. And even if she does get completely crazy, soon she'll be old enough to go to school, and we'll start the terrible twos all over again with Christopher. After 3 tantruming girls in their terrible twos, I'm curious to see what a boy will be like. Probably no big deal, at least compared to Sammie ☐

The Lucky Rainbow (And God) Saved Us

Ok, of course *all* the credit goes to God, but I was going for the catchy title. Yesterday I had one of the biggest scares of my life – a near-death experience. I'm going to start at the beginning of an otherwise wonderful day...

We were looking for a fun place to take the kids, and we decided upon the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. The kids had their usual fun playing in the water hole, and the capuchin monkeys were quite active, enjoying a game of tag. It was really cool to see; one would chase the other and then when he caught him, they'd switch and the chaser became the chasee – is that a word? Doesn't matter, I think you get the point. Capuchin monkeys are smart.

There was a kangaroo separated from the rest of the roos, and we thought it was a baby, until we looked a little closer and noticed she actually had a little baby sticking out of her pouch – SOO cute! It must have been a different type of kangaroo or wallaby than the eastern grey kangaroos though because it was much smaller, and obviously an adult since she had a baby. But anyway, they were definitely the highlight of our trip.

Earlier in the day, when we were deciding where to go, we had brought up the possibility of go-carts, and our 4-year-old had not forgotten. Since the kids were being (somewhat) good and it was still early (we were hoping for a triple kid pass-out on the hour-long drive home), we decided to stop for some quick laps around the go-cart track. I stayed in the car because we had 2 kids who fell asleep, and from there, I was able to watch the storm roll in. It was really neat; there was a lightning bolt that struck near the go-carting place, and everyone waiting in line said "whoa!". It was followed by a VERY LOUD crack of thunder, and that was the end of the go-

carting. My husband had already ridden once with our 4-year-old, and they were waiting in line so our 8-year-old could go. But the poor kid has her father's bad luck because they shut the place down for the storm before she got to go. But she was a good sport about it; I actually think she was just so happy to be out of the storm and in the "safety" of the car... but you will soon see why I put the "safety" in quotes while referring to the car.

As we headed away from the go-cart place, it rained heavily. So heavily that the road flooded immediately and visibility was down to almost 0. I told my husband he should pull over, but you couldn't even see enough to do that. But then it cleared a little, and there was a huge rainbow. It was beautiful; I don't think I've ever seen one in a full arc like that. I tried to take a picture but we had now gotten on the interstate and were travelling fast, so we'll have to see how it comes out. I was distracted by the rainbow, and this is where everything happened so fast it's kind of a blur. But I'll recap best I can... The cars in front of us were braking, so my husband made a hard stop – not all that hard, so I didn't really feel like we were in danger. I see a car on the shoulder all smashed up and facing us. The driver is getting out and looking at his car, and that's when I realize that it had *just* happened – no emergency vehicles were on the scene yet, and it's still happening because I hear horns honking. Then my husband says very calmly, "We're going to get hit." I looked in my sideview mirror and saw a semi coming at us, and he's not stopping. Instead he's coming right at my mirror and the next thing I know, the semi is next to us on the shoulder. Thank God there was a shoulder. Thank God my husband didn't pull onto the shoulder trying to save us, or he would have steered into the path of the semi. Thank God for a lot of things, but most of all, for the safety of my family. Turns out the horn that was honking was the *semi* warning us of our impending doom. All these news stories were flashing through my head on the rest of the way home about people whose

vehicles got pancaked by semis. It was a split second away from happening to us, and there was nothing that could have stopped it, except Divine Intervention. I called 911 to report the accident, and that's when I learned that my cell phone makes a little noise when you do that – to make sure you really want to call, I guess. But the good news is, it didn't seem as if anyone was hurt because like I said, the driver of the car that caused it all was out and looking at his car. He was either brave or not very smart, because if that semi hadn't of stopped next to our car where it did, he would have been plowed over. Someone should tell that Subway guy from my last post that this is what 911 is really for! And this whole incident makes a case for my husband to try to get me to fly to Florida next time rather than drive. All I know is, in the car, we had a **very** close call. Rarely are there close calls on a plane – you either crash or you don't!

A reminder to all to be thankful every day for everything you have!

Nocturnal Purple-Legged Baby

So how is life with 4 kids? One word – chaotic. I suppose some of that can be attributed to us not taking any time off from volunteering with the various community groups we are involved in... Most logical people would have done the smart thing and laid low for awhile. But us, we did just the opposite and jumped into a few new projects head first – oops. But, I do enjoy getting out and spending time with fellow adults, and besides, we've already committed ourselves, so it's too late now.

But anyway, the kids are adjusting just fine to having a new

little brother. Our almost 2-year-old has reached the terrible twos officially, and she spends most of her time being upset or making messes. Figures, doesn't it, that she would reach this stage right as there's a new baby in the house. But it can't be helped, and we just have to grin and bear it for awhile until it passes. The upside is that her terrible twos are no where near the magnitude of the turmoil that her older sister caused in the house when she was going through them, but it's still hard to see our once sweet little girl being so nasty. I don't know what it is about the terrible twos, but every kid goes through them (maybe the terrible twos aren't so bad with boys? I'm hopeful...), and they can totally change a child's personality for months, even years. Little Disney was the sweetest baby and toddler, and now that she is almost 2, she has begun tantruming (almost constantly), hitting, spitting, and biting. Much, if not all of the behavior comes from being so frustrated – she gets frustrated when people don't understand what she wants or when she thinks her sisters are taking things from her. Even if they're just trying to help her, if anyone is doing anything she doesn't like, she'll throw a tantrum. But what keeps me going is knowing that it's just the age, and she'll magically return to normal one day; that's how it works. It usually happens suddenly, almost as suddenly as it began – it's like a spell is broken, and hopefully it's sooner rather than later; but I'm prepared for the long haul because her sister's terrible twos (and boy, were they *terrible*) lasted from about the ages of 16 months until she was 4 years old.

And speaking of our 4-year-old, Sammie loves her new little brother and always wants to hold him. I'm trying to get better about how nervous it makes me; especially because Disney sees her older sisters holding him and then of course she wants to do it. But as time goes by, he gets stronger and less floppy, so eventually I can let them help more and be relaxed about it.

Taylor, our 8-year-old, loves her new little brother also, although with 2 younger sisters, she's kinda been there and done that, as far as new babies go. She is still a big help, especially with Disney, but she and Sammie fight constantly, and now Disney is starting to join in... If we could get a handle on some of the fighting, things would be much better around here. I feel like my kids fight, argue, and bicker *constantly*. I probably feel this way because it's true. Part of it is Disney being so frustrated all the time, and then neither she nor Sammie like to share things with others; and then also Taylor can be really nasty to Sammie, probably just cuz it's summer and they're sick of each other. Thank goodness school starts in less than 2 weeks. I say that now, but I'll also be losing my day-help when Taylor goes back to school, so we'll have to see how things work out.

As for the little guy himself, Christopher is almost 4 weeks old, and he's doing well. He is a constant joy to have around, but aren't they all at this age? The only problem with him is that he seems to be nocturnal – wakes all night and sleeps during the day. Luckily for me, my husband is a light sleeper and wakes with him before I even hear anything. He is getting no sleep, but I told him weeks ago, once you let me start sleeping through the night, my body will get used to it and I won't wake up... I don't think he listened. But my sleeping-lightly days are over – during my pregnancy I awoke very easily at every little noise, but now I'm back to my I-could-sleep-through-Armageddon phase. I also warned Hubby that this baby was going to be nocturnal because in the womb, he wouldn't move much during the day, but he's start going crazy about 9pm until after I went to bed.

And almost all new babies bring with them the fear of something being wrong – the other day, Christopher's legs turned purple out of no where... I had just gotten him out of his stroller, but his straps weren't too tight or anything like that; I checked on them later. It was horribly scary to

see his little purple legs, and I've never experienced that with my girls. But the doctor didn't seem to be too concerned; just something to take a look at next appointment – might be a blood vessel spasm, which I found out is not terribly uncommon in infants after looking it up on the internet. There is a condition called Raynaud's Syndrome that is characterized by purple limbs, however they're accompanied by extreme pain, and little Christopher was sleeping calmly while this happened. We'll see what the doctor says on Monday.

That's about it for now; it's good to be sitting here blogging again – it's been so hectic for a few weeks that I was not in front of my computer enough to even blog. But then I started thinking of all my faithful readers I was disappointing, and I thought I'd better make the time to give them something to read ☐

Flashback!

In the last few days, my recovery from the emergency c-section has not been going well. I awoke from a nap Thursday night feeling awful, but luckily my medication kicked in, and I was able to enjoy the midnight showing of *The Dark Knight* – more on that later. Friday we met Grandma in South Bend Indiana which is halfway between Chicago where she lives and Ohio where we live to transfer my kids for a week's vacation with Grandma. I felt awful all day, and I started shivering in the restaurant. I knew there was something really wrong when I went outside into the 90° oven and actually *enjoyed* it – uh oh.

When I got back to Ohio, I had an appointment with my doctor

for her to take out my staples (yes, they had to actually use *staples* to put me back together, yuck) and that actually went well. Hardly hurt at all, just a little pinch, and it didn't take long. I brought up my symptoms to my doctor and she said everything was normal, and I believed her because when I had my other babies, I would heal up right away, so I figured these were all just side effects from the cesarean. But I took another nap when I got home and when I woke up, I felt like I was dying – that's really the only way to describe it. We took my temperature and it was 102.7°, so of course I had chills, the sweats, headache, and pain. A quick look on the internet gave us the diagnosis: mastitis – a common infection often suffered by breast-feeding mothers. We called the doctor and they wouldn't prescribe any antibiotics over the phone, so we headed to the hospital for the 2nd time in a week...

The admissions people panicked when they saw us coming in with the baby, but we quickly explained it wasn't him, thank goodness. Anyway, after a quick look, the ER doctor confirmed our internet diagnosis and sent us home with a prescription. But since all the pharmacies were closed in our town, they gave me some medicine right then and there. "Name and birthdate", they always ask at the hospital before they give you your meds, and I was like, FLASHBACK! I thought I was done with this for awhile! But for spending a Friday night in the ER, it wasn't so bad; we were actually in and out in an hour. If this had happened in suburban Chicago where I used to live, it would have taken 3-4 hours to wait our turn in the ER, and they would have wheeled a few body bags past us while we were waiting. So today, I feel much better comparatively, and since the girls are with grandma, I slept until 11:30, so I'm sure that also helped. The antibiotics seem to be working already, and it was nice to wake up and not feel like I was dying, something that hasn't happened for a few days. I also feel better that now I think my recovery from everything is headed in the right direction, whereas when I felt crappy and

didn't know why, it was discouraging because I was thinking, will I ever feel better?

My husband is peeved at my OB-GYN for not checking me more thoroughly during my visit with her yesterday. I agree; I did mention my symptoms and she was too dismissive, but being a man (especially one who won't listen to doctor's orders – if the doctor tells him to do something or recommends some sort of exam or test and he doesn't want to do it, he just won't) I don't think he understands how important to me it is to have a woman OB-GYN, and she is the only one in town. Besides, I do like her, she is gentle and she has been through 3 c-sections herself, so she knew exactly what to tell me about what to expect. If we do have any more children, there will be some debate about which doctor we will use. Well, anyway... off to Walmart to get my *third* prescription this week!

He Is Here!



After months of blogging about my pregnancy, it's finally over and with the best result possible – a healthy, beautiful baby boy! His name is Christopher Vincent and he

was 8 lbs. 2 oz. and 20.7 inches long when he was born at 2:53 pm on July 11. He is named for his father (at my insistence because my husband felt it was egotistical of him to duplicate his name – not when others do it, just him for some reason) and his middle name is after the baby's late grandfather, my husband's father who passed away from Lou Gehrig's disease when our oldest child was just one year old. So we've been waiting a long time for a namesake for Vincent, and now little Christopher Vincent is here. He is a perfect baby and rarely cries, although he does seem to have his days and nights mixed up. Today he slept for almost 5 hours until I woke him up to eat. But that's probably because last night he woke up every hour. I wish I had known he was going to sleep that long because I would have taken a nap! It's been difficult for me to sleep at night due to the extreme pain I'm feeling because of the emergency cesarean they had to do to bring little Christopher into the world.

Here's a warning – I'm going to get a little bit graphic medically here because I feel the need to explain what happened to me. That way, other moms searching for info about pregnancy,



cesareans, etc. can happen across my site, and maybe it will help educate them and ease their fears if they know some things they can expect. For the rest of you, I apologize, and

I suggest just looking at the really cute pictures of the baby and moving on to my other posts.

So I went to the hospital Friday at 7 am to get induced... I was really excited, but also pretty nervous. It's ironic that I didn't allow myself to get as nervous as I was with my 3 previous pregnancies because my last birth went relatively smoothly, so I figured, why get all worked up when everything will probably be fine? But it wasn't. Well, in the end it was, but until I got to see Christopher, Friday was one of the worst days of my life. It all started when the nurse couldn't get my IV in. I always bruise like crazy from the IV, but they've never had trouble getting it in me before. In fact, I seem to remember writing a post in my blog about what good veins they always say I have. Anyway, the nurse was trying to "save me a poke" and get a blood sample at the same time she hooked up my IV. I ended up with two holes on my right hand that swelled up like balloons – and I still had to get the IV put into my left hand. All that and she STILL had to draw blood from the vein like a regular blood sample, thus not "saving me a poke" at all as she had promised. But it didn't matter because I never care too much about the blood draw since I'm used to it and my veins are so easy to find... but anyway, after all this, I had to make a stupid comment – I said to the nurse, "I hope this isn't an omen for how the rest of the day will go..." Idiot. Apparently I cursed myself because things were just going to get worse.



The contractions started getting pretty painful and I called for the epidural, which if you don't know, is a pain elimination procedure (supposedly) administered directly into the spine. It's very uncomfortable to receive one, although it's nothing compared to the pain of the contractions it relieves, provided someone poking around in your spine doesn't bother you. Except that mine didn't work, which I'm told is rare, so don't worry, just research other options before you go... But for me, this is where things go from bad to worse. Once we've all determined that the epidural didn't take, they make a call for the anesthesiologist to come back and discuss options. Except that, lucky for me (sarcasm), there was a shift change, so the person who messed up my first epidural was no longer around to mess up a second one. And, of course the new anesthesiologist didn't want to do one on a patient who had been done by someone else. And I should note that every time they call the anesthesiologist, it takes forever and a day for them to come because they're usually doing other patients in the hospital or who knows what. I wonder if it's like that at larger hospitals... Our hospital is quite small, and I've often wondered if there are certain aspects of care that could be better as a result. Anyway, so the 2nd anesthesiologist is explaining my options to me, and she is talking so slowly, I swear I was close to kicking her – I could still feel my legs, after all, and that was their fault, not mine. As she's explaining my options to me (not that there were many left), the nurse decided to check me and that's when she discovered we didn't have time to do *anything* – the baby was coming! The anesthesiologist was shooed away and the doctor was called, but of course with the way things had been going that day, she had gone home and so we had to wait for her to get back to the hospital. She got there and I

was finally able to start pushing, except the baby wouldn't budge. I think the pain was worse than it's ever been, and I could tell the baby wasn't being pushed, and then the worst news yet – the baby's heart rate started dropping. Everyone started running around, honestly, it was total chaos, but I couldn't even think straight through all the pain. They wheeled me into the surgery room where there were like 10 people wearing surgery masks all doing different things. I was actually in favor of them knocking me out – the sooner, the better. Of course because of the epidural not working, I felt them cut me open, but in retrospect I don't know if it hurt more than I was freaked out about being able to feel them cut me open. My arms and legs were tied down and I will be honest – it was a horrible experience – I couldn't sleep my first night in the hospital because right when I'd fall asleep, I'd have a flashback of the experience and jolt awake. Then, I smelled something funny in my oxygen mask and the next thing I know, I'm being wheeled out of the room – it was over! They had gassed me after all – lucky for everyone involved! But now I'm stuck with the awful recovery process of a c-section. One of the worst things about it besides the pain is the fact that I can't lift heavy objects – including kids. The second I got home, my 21-month-old reached her arms out and said "Mommy!" with a big smile, and promptly started crying when I couldn't pick her up. Between the lack of sleep, the hormone changes, and me missing her, I started crying, but luckily grandma saw me lose it and stepped in to rescue us; giving my daughter ice cream to feed me that made it all better for both of us. Now, only 2 days later, my daughter seems used to not being picked up, and the pain seems to be getting better, finally. Yesterday the pain was getting worse instead of better; when I woke up, every square inch of my body throbbed with pain, and I couldn't move at all – it was awful and totally discouraging. But, I had forgotten that the doctor said to also use ibuprofen along with my pain meds, so ever since I've been trying that, it's been working for me. But believe it or not, another pain remedy is baby-

smelling. You just sniff the head of the newborn baby and give him kisses and it makes the pain better too! The worst part of the whole thing is that I had really wanted more kids, but after Friday, I just don't know if I have it in me to go through something like that (or worse!) again... But for now, I am enjoying mommyhood immensely, and the girls LOVE their new little brother. Taylor and Sammie want to hold him all the time, and Sammie especially can't keep her hands off him. She's always petting his head or touching his hands, or softly kissing him... she is so gentle; it's very sweet. And Disney, being almost 2, is getting her own ideas on how to care for Christopher as well. Yesterday she tried to insist that he be put into his car seat and of course she threw a tantrum when it didn't go her way... But overall, things are going great and will be even better once we unmix Christopher's days and nights and get some more sleep!

Oh, and one more hint that will give you a fun momento for the baby book. If you mail a birth announcement to the White House, they will send you a congrats card from the President! Signed by an intern, of course, but hey, for some people in the '90's, that would have been Monica Lewinsky! Here is the address you send it to, you can also do this for wedding invitations, though I'm not sure the address is the same. I would just do a google search for "white house wedding announcement" or something like that.

Send your baby's name, birthdate and address to:

White House Greetings Office
Room 39
Washington, DC 20500

The Weed Saga

We became home-owners about a year and half ago, and as fellow home-owners know, it's a lot different than renting. For one thing, we now have a yard to maintain and being 2 very busy people who know absolutely nothing about landscaping, we've found this aspect of home ownership quite challenging. As many of you know, my husband is a very hard worker, and when he is off work, we are usually out and about with the kids – no Saturdays working on the yard for us! So I usually venture outside while I'm playing with the kids in the summer and make a haphazard attempt at pulling weeds and trying to make the yard presentable. The good news is we have yet to receive a complaint notice on a stick from the city, like I sometimes see in other less fortunate yards. The bad news is that if we were to ever get one of those notices, I fear now would be the time since I have been immobile with my pregnancy so far this summer.

So my awesome husband tried to make arrangements with a local fellow to have the weeds done for me on my birthday, but the guy showed up and was gone by the time we returned from lunch, etc. less than 3 hours later. He did get some of the weeds, but not all that many, and lo and behold, the other day we received a bill from him – for \$140!!! Even if he had been here 3 hours, that would be over \$46 / hour and he didn't even do nearly everything he was supposed to do! Needless to say, I'm going to dispute the bill, but first I'm going to have a baby and get out of the hospital, so he's going to have to wait. In the meantime, we've enlisted a friend who is a landscaper to help, and he's going to visit and work hourly on Thursdays... not the immediate weed relief I was hoping for, but I'm sure he will do a much better job for a much more reasonable rate. He already visited after weed guy #1 and confirmed that there are still LOTS of weeds in our yard. I just don't know what weed guy #1 was thinking... it's tough

times in the economy and he seemed nice enough, but he must be crazy if he thinks we're going to pay him that much for what little weed relief he gave us... My town is going to be offering college classes soon so maybe I should just take a horticulture class and do the landscaping myself from now on...