



*"The greatest joy is to become a mother, the second greatest is to be a midwife"*

*- Norwegian proverb*



Sr Ingrid Groenewald  
Registered Nurse and  
Private Midwife:  
IBCLC International Board  
Certified Lactation  
Consultant  
Cannon Rocks  
Kenton-on-Sea  
www.sisteringrid.co.za  
igroenewald@yahoo.com

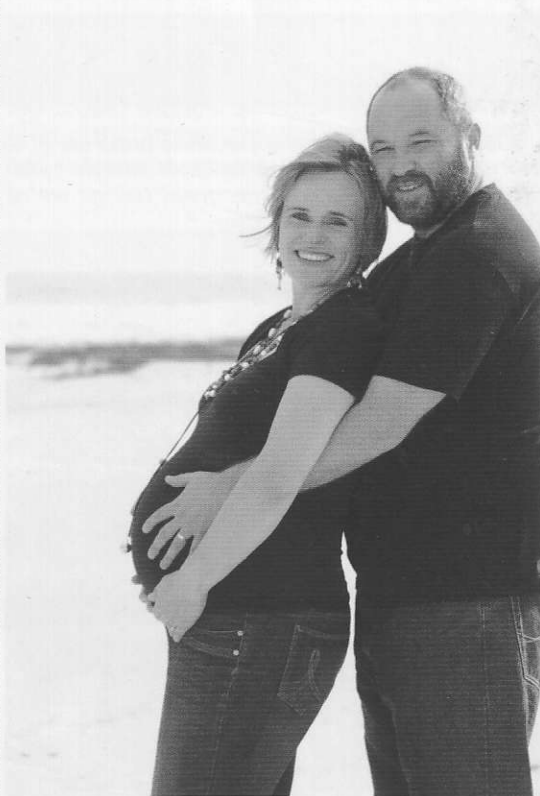


This article is my personal story of our homebirth-experience.

### *Why choose a homebirth?*

I have been in private practice for 14 years and been involved in many hospital and homebirths. This was my third pregnancy; my previous two births were easy; I had a healthy pregnancy, implicating a low-risk pregnancy and therefore opted for a homebirth. I felt confident in my ability to go through labour again and I was blessed with a very supportive husband (Christoph), midwife, gynaecologist and back-up hospital.

I have always been amazed at other women's beautiful birthing photos and have decided to use a professional photographer: my friend, Este Franz, to help capture our special birth.



On the morning of 14 November 2012, I awoke with mild contractions, but decided to still take the kids to school as I needed to get the last groceries before Erich's birth. With the help of a TENS machine and Christoph, I managed to shop and still have a chat or two in Spar, without other people even noticing that I was in labour. The TENS (Transcutaneous-electrical-nerve-stimulation) really worked effectively. I would recommend it to anybody, as it is non-invasive and provides the freedom of mobility.

Back at home, we had a long walk on the beach. It was wonderful being outside, walking in the cool morning breeze and knowing that Erich would be born soon. I paused often and breathed through every contraction. The rest of the morning passed quickly with lots of relaxation, walking, chatting, laughing and backrubs from my husband. It was great to have had the time to be alone, without others looking at me or wanting to continuously monitor me. I was blessed being able to do my own examinations: listening to the foetal heartbeat and knowing that all was well. I could simply relax and work with my body.

The contractions became more intense and our two midwife-friends: Leigh-Anne Pearlson and Nicole Anglings, commenced their 90-minute trip to our house to be with us.



I had very strong contractions and tried to relax and breathe through them. The birth-pool and warm water helped me relax between the contractions.



A couple of minutes after the arrival of the midwives, I felt severe pressure and the feeling of involuntary pushing. The desire to bear down was overwhelming and with only one push Erich was born. It was so surreal to unexpectedly hold our baby with such a short second stage of labour. To me, it felt

as if my body took over and that without a conscious effort from my part, Erich was born, a beautiful 3.8kg baby boy!



Literature confirms it as a form of resuscitation as extra oxygen is provided to the baby until the Ductus Arteriosus closes and baby can breathe comfortably on his own.

*In retrospect, the advantages of our homebirth:*

- Labour was allowed to progress normally, without any interference and unnecessary interventions
- Personalised one-on-one care from midwives whom I knew and trusted
- We were in the privacy of our own, relaxed environment
- There was no need to go anywhere, our midwives came to us.
- We were eating our own food and sleeping in our own bed
- I was with the people I chose to be with in our labour and birth
- Erich stayed with me at all times after the birth
- I took my first bath after the birth with our baby



We practised delayed cord-cutting, the cord was not cut immediately after birth. This allowed him to still continue receiving vital oxygen from me until he started to breathe by himself.

I thank my husband for supporting my wish to birth at home. I thank our midwives who were willing to travel much further than usual to assist in a safe, exultant birth.