

Listening to Newborns

The Birth of Caleb Bartlett

By Sue Spiry



Kristine and Caleb Bartlett

WHEN KRISTINE BARTLETT AND HER HUSBAND DANIEL HEADED TO BAYSTATE FRANKLIN MEDICAL CENTER IN GREENFIELD ON NOVEMBER 22 FOR THE BIRTH OF THEIR FIRST CHILD, THEY EXPECTED THE DELIVERY TO GO AS SMOOTHLY AS THE PREGNANCY. AND FOR A WHILE, IT DID.

Kristine labored throughout the night, choosing to spend much of her time in the birthing tub. Wanting to try a water birth, when the time came, she began to push.

Kristine was guided by certified nurse-midwife Susan Peck from Baystate Pioneer Women's Health, and nurse Suzanne Stoneham, as well as Daniel and her mom, Linda Jablonski, who is also an obstetrics nurse at Baystate Franklin. Kristine pushed for about two hours before deciding to leave the tub for more hands-on guidance. An hour later, Caleb Bartlett entered the world at a healthy 8 pounds 10 ounces.

A NATURAL INTRODUCTION
Peck immediately placed

Caleb on mom Kristine's chest, and Stoneham laid a heated blanket over the two. His cord was not clamped or cut until it was done pulsing. His airway was not suctioned, and he was allowed time to bond with his mother and self attach to the breast.

This practice, called "Listening to Newborns" is used at Baystate Franklin Medical Center so mom and baby can immediately bond through skin-to-skin contact.

Stoneham explains, "Newborns must make many quick transitions after they are born—changing their circulation, starting to breathe, regulating their temperature, and getting nutrition. When we stay out of it, it all happens smoothly and quickly. Taking babies away first to suction, dry, clean, and stimulate can confuse their natural instincts. We always thought that a more natural introduction to the world was better for babies; now we have the research to support that."

She says that most babies are able to clear out their own lungs without suctioning, and begin rooting for mom's breast to feed within about 20 minutes. The team waits until the umbilical cord stops pulsing before cutting the cord, which allows the blood to equalize and helps reduce the risk of anemia. In addition, the skin-on-skin contact reduces anxiety for both mom and baby.

A DRAMATIC TURN

While Caleb was getting to know his mom, however, a serious complication developed with Kristine. The baby's placenta was not delivering on its own, a condition called "retained placenta."

Obstetrician Dr. Linda Polonsky, also from Baystate Pioneer Women's Health, was called in, and they moved Kristine into surgery to remove the placenta. She began to hemorrhage and required two transfusions, but the surgery was successful. After recovery, she returned to her husband and her new son.

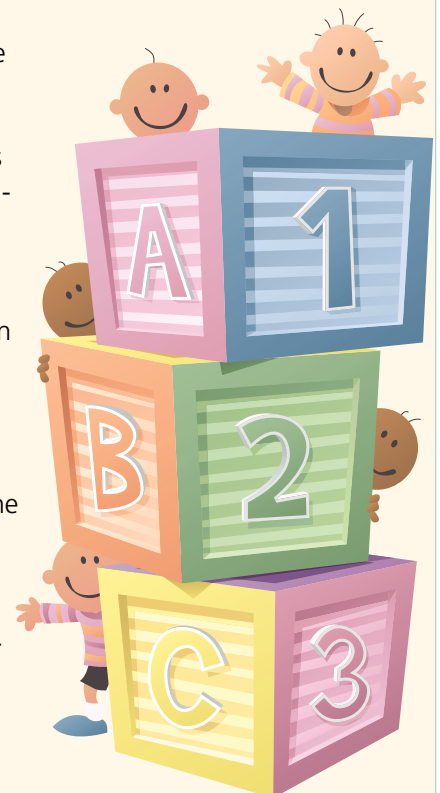
Kristine is especially thankful she was able to hold and connect with Caleb immediately after birth. Since she wasn't able to breastfeed again until later that day, she credits the early contact and experience with making it easier for Caleb to regain his natural instincts. She appreciates the staff for providing a warm, family-centered birth experience, while also being able to quickly respond when complications arose.

While acknowledging that the first couple weeks after delivery were difficult, Kristine and Caleb soon settled into a more regular routine—one that included attending the hospital's weekly breastfeeding support group led by Stoneham.

"I love being a mom," says Kristine. "It's the hardest job in the world, but also the most rewarding."

More of Kristine Bartlett's dramatic birth story can be found online, including additional photos and video clips. Go to baystatehealth.org/annualreport and click on "Stories of Care."

For a referral to a certified nurse-midwife or obstetrician on staff at Baystate Franklin Medical Center or Baystate Medical Center, call 1-800-377-4325.



A MOTHER'S HEART

THE BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST OF TIMES FOR THIS NEW MOM

By Andrew Shanley



Jamie and Jax Delaney

JAMIE DELANEY OF PITTSFIELD WAS IN THE EARLY STAGES OF LABOR AT NORTH ADAMS REGIONAL HOSPITAL LAST JULY WHEN SHE STARTED HAVING INTENSE CHEST PAINS.

Her obstetrical team decided to deliver her baby by Cesarean section, and Jax Delaney was born a healthy boy. But his mom's ordeal was far from over.

Once the baby was delivered, Jamie received an echocardiogram, which showed a pooling of blood around her heart. Her aorta had ruptured. She was rushed by helicopter to Baystate Medical Center in Springfield and quickly underwent a series of CAT scans.

A team of doctors, led by Dr. Daniel Engelman, a cardiac surgeon at Baystate Medical Center, gathered at her bedside with the verdict. "They told me they had to bring me to surgery right away," Jamie recalls. "It was clear things were pretty serious and that I might not survive. It was a difficult moment. My family hadn't even arrived yet, but there was no time to wait."

Jamie's sister arrived at the hospital shortly after. "I was able to tell her that I loved her, and to ask her to tell my family that I loved them and my little baby boy," says Jamie.

According to Engelman, most patients with a ruptured aorta like Jamie's die within an hour. "But childbirth is known to cause your blood to clot very well to prevent post-childbirth hemorrhage," he says. "In Jamie's case it held together just long enough to get her to the operating room."

She was in surgery for nine hours, during which time the cardiac team put her on a bypass pump, which did the work of her heart and lungs. Her body temperature was cooled to 15 degrees Celsius. Her heart was stopped. The surgeons knew they were under the clock. But by the end, they were able to successfully repair the damage.

Jamie spent about a week recovering on the hospital's cardiac unit. "The care I received was phenomenal," she says. "I felt like they went above and beyond for me. Every time there was an issue, a team of doctors was there at my bedside. I was given a private room to make room for a crib so Jax could be with me. They had a maternity nurse come regularly, and a lactation consultant. They just wanted to make it as easy as possible for me."

Jamie is appreciative of the fact that she was quickly transferred to Baystate Medical Center and its Baystate Heart & Vascular Program when crisis struck. Baystate Medical Center is one of the Nation's 100 Top Hospitals® for cardiovascular care.

Since she was recovering from two surgeries—her Cesarean section and major heart surgery—it's been a slow process to regain her strength, but Jamie is expected to have a full return to the life she lived before baby Jax was born. She will, however, have one lasting reminder of all she endured; her son was born with a small birthmark on his foot, and it's in the shape of a heart.

For information about the Baystate Heart & Vascular Program, visit baystatehealth.org/heart.



Dr. Daniel Engelman

ALMOST ALL PATIENTS WITH A RUPTURED AORTA LIKE JAMIE'S DIE WITHIN AN HOUR.

