

The weather in early January 2012 in Brno didn't get any better for us still hoping for some snow so we went indoors to get some professional pictures taken. Míša is not keen on cameras these days and does everything she can to hide her face when she sees a camera pointing at her. But my parents had a talk with her and we had a very successful photo shoot.







As our stay in Brno was coming to an end, we also had to decide on our short term au-pair. With Jeremy working and my busy schedule running My IVF Alternative and getting bigger and bigger was making it harder for me to keep up with our very active daughter. Not to mention that we have no family near us in Atlanta and we wanted to make sure Míša had a pleasant transition from being a single child to having a sibling. Also, having another person at home speaking Czech to her is a great benefit.

We were very lucky that we found a great girl, Michaela, that just stood out from the rest of the interviewed girls. Fun, loving and very nurturing. And Míša absolutely LOVED her. Once she joined our family, they were very active together – playing, taking dance classes, going to a kid gym, park and more. Michaela was also a great new family member overall so I could focus on my miracle pregnancy and helping others with their fertility journey.

Despite of my fears of something going wrong, my pregnancy was absolutely perfect. I was walking daily and trying to exercise often as sitting at a desk for long periods of time was causing my legs to swell. Besides it was nice to see people and get compliments on my cute belly ;o) Thanks to my pregnancy going so well, I could also do a lot of outdoor activities with my very active daughter Míša. Our biggest adventure was an all day spent at the Stone Mountain Park – just us girls – Míša, Michaela, myself and our baby girl in utero. We had a great time. By arriving early, we walked around the lake and saw turtles, fed ducks, listened to the pipe organ playing great songs and Míša even requested her favorite Somewhere Over the Rainbow. We walked through the Stone Mountain village, then had a picnic overlooking the carving on the mountain which was very lovely. Although I was already 36 weeks pregnant (I had my hospital bags packed since the 25th week just in case ;o) I felt great and we decided to take the sky lift to the top of the mountain and hike it down. What a wonderful time we had that day.



We even made it to Miša's friend's birthday party that evening. Lots of fun for the kids!



Still feeling great, I was waiting for some signs of upcoming labor. Friends and experienced mothers themselves, kept asking me if I was feeling any contractions or pain at all. Surprisingly no. Besides several trips to the bathroom each night, little swollen legs and short of breath, I hardly knew I was pregnant. But I loved mornings towards the end of my pregnancy. I guess my baby was running out of space and every morning (believe it or not, she did not keep me up for a single night!) she was having a party in there! My stomach kept moving all over and everyone at home thought it was the hilarious thing ever until Friday, April 6th, when I couldn't feel anything at all. I drank a lot of fluids, I even went for a walk to get her up and moving but nothing. Freaked out, I called my doctor's office and, of course, they told me to come in. I was put on a heart beat monitor, they were measuring contractions and did an ultrasound as well and finally at the ultrasound, they could notice some minor movements which calmed me down. As I was waiting for all the testing I was being told how dangerous it is, not feeling the baby move this late in the pregnancy and what they normally do at this point is induction. Which totally freaked me out! Luckily, some movement was detected and the doctor said that everything was OK and I could go home but with Easter weekend, if I still didn't feel her move to go straight to the hospital.

Easter was here. This year was the first one when Miša knew that it was going to be fun and she was looking forward to the Easter Egg Hunt. We got invited by our friend to their church, where they planned an Easter Egg drop from a helicopter! They also had a huge festival set up outdoors for children to participate in all kinds of games and adventures. I don't even have to describe the several hours of full energy as Miša went from one fun attraction to another. She got bunches of eggs with a surprise inside and totally passed out in the car on our way home.

The next day was Easter Sunday and we planned an Easter Egg Hunt at home. So 39 weeks and 3 days pregnant, I was climbing up and down our steep backyard to hide eggs so that not only Miša but also Michaela would experience a true

Easter Egg Hunt. We had a blast! It was nice watching the excitement in the girls' eyes. Busy weekend but still no signs of labor.

I guess I spoke too soon as that night I woke up at 2 AM (as I usually did many times each night) but this time it was different. My urge to use the bathroom has turned into regular discomfort – every 4 minutes. So at about 3AM I woke Jeremy up letting him know that I think that the baby is coming. You can only imagine his panic, just like they show in the movies ;o)

I wanted to stay at home little longer as during our hospital tour we were advised that, but Jeremy didn't want to waste a second. He got Michaela up so that she could stay with Míša and started speeding through quiet Atlanta streets to the Northside Hospital. I wasn't complaining as the pain was getting worse very fast.

We got checked into the hospital quickly, I got hooked up to all kinds of monitors and my contractions were now 2-3 minutes apart and they were NOT fun. My plan from early on was to get an epidural and this feeling further reassured me that I made the right decision. But before I could get one, a lot had to happen. My water didn't break and I was only dilated to 3 cm so nurses didn't even think of me as a patient yet as they see a lot of women in false labor and they get sent home. My biggest problem, however, was that I was vomiting a lot quickly dehydrating myself. We were very lucky that our doctor's office works with Northside Hospital as it is the largest hospital around (over 15,000 babies are born there each year) and they have the highest level of NICU around. All of their 43 delivery rooms are large, private and ready for anything. I knew I was in good hands.

Being very uncomfortable, I was thinking about all the women who deliver naturally and prayed I wouldn't have to. Then, during one of my already very strong contractions my water broke. I was officially a patient that was going to deliver hopefully in the next 24 hours. I could finally be given some pain medications but I wish I didn't. They gave me morphium and IV for my vomiting but that just slowed down my contractions from 4 minutes apart to about 10 minutes apart and the pain was still the same. Just I was doopey, dizzy and totally out of it. The rest of the delivery and pretty much the afternoon is a blur. But it went something like this: once I was about 4 cm dilated, I could get an epidural. ALL the pain went away and I was so tired that I fell asleep. I remember being woken up as the doctor was concerned with the baby's heartbeat that was dropping with each of my contraction. She didn't expect much of a progress but she checked my cervix anyway. To her amazement, I was fully dilated and she arranged everything for delivery including a team from NICU as she didn't know what my baby's problem was.

Our daughter Payton Elizabeth (Eliška) was born on April 9th, 2012 at 10.28AM absolutely perfect. Measuring 50cm and weighing 2,89kg (that is 19 ¾" and 6lbs 6oz).

We were shortly moved to a recovery room for the next day and we have been enjoying her and Míša ever since.



