

The best laid (birth) plans...

JENNIFER & ELLIOT

...don't always WORK OUT as TV doc ONE BORN EVERY MINUTE shows. Here FOUR MUMS share their BIRTH PLANS, then tell us what REALLY happened

BY JILL FOSTER & CLAIRE WILSON

'I was NAIVE about how PAINFUL it would be'

Jill Cassidy, 31, a PR manager from south-west London, lives with her husband Declan, 30, a business development manager and their daughter Bella, three months.

JILL'S BIRTH PLAN

- A water birth at the birthing unit in Kingston Hospital, Surrey.
 - Use of a birthing ball when needed.
 - No pain relief.
 - Declan to cut the cord.
 - The baby is to find my breast, not forced to feed.
- Jill says** "I didn't know anyone who'd had a water birth when I was putting my birth plan



Jill and baby Bella

together, but I love swimming and thought being in water would help me relax during the birth.

My husband was totally supportive and I liked the idea of the process being a bit more soothing than what I'd been told about standard hospital bed births.

However, because the unit I chose is midwife, not doctor, led, I was told I wouldn't be allowed to have an epidural if the pain became too much – but I wanted to give birth naturally anyway.

Declan was convinced I'd wimp out, but I decided because I'm pretty healthy and do yoga, there was no reason I couldn't have a relaxed, drug-free birth."

THE REALITY "No amount of yoga could have helped the agony I was in! I completely underestimated how painful labour would be – but then I think most women do with their first child. I was

nine days overdue when my labour started in the middle of the night on October 27 last year.

I hooked myself up to my TENS machine, which sends mild electric pulses through the body to ease the pain.

By 5pm, the contractions were strong and I thought I should go to the unit. When we arrived, the midwife told me I was only 3cm dilated – you have to be 10cm to give birth – and sent me home.

Five hours later, I returned, but I was still only at 3cm. I begged to stay as I was in agony so I was given a shot

