

Teen gives birth, then walks to hospital

By Pamela Hale-Burns, Staff Writer



Dr. Jose Perez of St. Mary Medical Center in Long Beach checks newborn Alejandro Parra with his mother, Xochitl Parra on Friday. Parra walked to the hospital after giving birth to the baby at home.

A 17-year-old girl who gave birth in her home walked four blocks to the hospital with her newborn's umbilical cord still attached.

Her baby was resting comfortably in her arms on Friday, but Long Beach resident Xochitl Parra's first moments of motherhood were rocky ones.

At 5:25 a.m. Wednesday, Parra was home alone and taking a shower -- it was just the start of a normal school day.

"I felt his head coming so I sit down and pushed so he could come out," she said.

The young, soon-to-be-mother had no idea what she was doing.

"I was just thinking about what to do and that's what came to my mind so that's what I did," she said.

Because her home phone was disconnected, Parra said she didn't call 911.

"I wrapped him up and quickly got dressed," she said. "I started walking and jogging to the hospital."

She walked four blocks, from 14th Street to Linden Avenue, to St. Mary Medical Center.

Parra refused to ask for assistance along the way. "I didn't want to ask the neighbors for help because it was too early and I was worried about what they would think," she said.

With her 8-pound, 3-ounce baby boy cradled in her arms and still attached to the umbilical cord, the teen rushed through alleys and across streets to get to the hospital.

"She came in the lobby and asked for help. She looked good," said Dr. Jose Perez, director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. "She still had the placenta and the baby was still attached, so of course everyone said, 'Don't move!'"

Although the teen was told she would deliver May 5, her quick response might very well have saved her and her baby's life during the early delivery.

"They could have bled to death, thank God that didn't happen," Perez said. "She was very clever. She knew what to do. She wrapped the baby up and walked over here."

Hospital staff called her son, Alejandro, a "miracle baby."

Certain her parents would be extremely upset, the high school sophomore kept her pregnancy a secret for nine months. And, other than the initial pregnancy test visit, she sought no prenatal care.

"I was hiding because I thought my mom would kick me out of the house," she said.

Even after she was in the hospital, the new mom didn't tell her parents the whole truth.

"I called my stepdad and told him to tell my mom I was in the hospital and to bring my medical and Social Security card," she said.

Hospital officials said Parra's parents did not want to comment about her pregnancy.

Despite fearing her parents' reaction, Parra says she wasn't afraid during the birth.

"I was just a little nervous," she said.

Thinking she would be homeless once the baby was born, Parra had made arrangements to live with a friend.

"My mom has accepted me, and I think she's going to help take care of him so I can keep going to school," she said.

The baby was quickly put on antibiotics.

"Everything is normal now and he's eating like a champ," Perez said.

"He needs no more monitoring and will not need to be in (the) NICU anymore."

Only a child herself, Parra hopes to work in a hospital some day.

"When I grow up I want to work in the medical (field) or something like that," she said.

Perez said the story should serve as a lesson to others.

"This is a heartwarming story, especially when a teenager does the right thing," he said. "We hear so much negative with teenagers throwing their babies in the Dumpsters. This baby is fine and hopefully there will be a happy ending with the extended family."

And no matter what, Parra said, be honest.

"Tell your parents the truth," she said.