Taryn Slater - After Birth

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IN THIS EPISODE

Bodybuilder and fitness coach Taryn Slater returns to Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC — this time as a brand-new mom, two weeks after her 40-weeks-pregnant Before Birth conversation. Her plan was a home water birth in the Pepperdine housing complex, surrounded by her husband, her mom, her midwife, and her doula. Instead, her contractions started around 1 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day, her water broke in the living room while her parents were still cooking the turkey, and the labor that followed stretched through the whole night and into Black Friday — hours of intensity with her cervix stuck at four centimeters while she tried the shower, the birth pool, and every position she knew. What does a competitive athlete do when the body she has trained to push through anything will not progress — and how much of the plan survives when labor refuses to follow it?

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: The Informed Pregnancy and Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Elliott Berlin. Today we are joined again by a bodybuilder and fitness coach who we spoke with recently when she was 40 weeks pregnant. Now just a couple of weeks later, she's a brand new mom. We welcome her back to explore the rest of the story. Taryn Slater, welcome back to the podcast.

TARYN SLATER: Thank you so much.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, you're always kind of smiley, but even though the audience can see you're extra smiley right now, I'm happy.

TARYN SLATER: Like baby girl is here finally.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, congratulations.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, thank you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So since we last spoke, you had your little baby girl. Let's go back to our last conversation. We were talking about how you were planning to do a home birth at Pepperdine

university in the housing complex there. You were excited. You were strong in the end of your pregnancy. Mobile. You made me feel bad about myself.

TARYN SLATER: I'm sorry.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's okay. It's my fault. And then like we were just waiting for stuff to happen. So what happened next?

TARYN SLATER: So on Thanksgiving day, no way. Yeah. Like super early in the morning, like maybe one in the morning or something like that. I started feeling contractions in the middle of the night, but they weren't like too bad. They were just like pretty mild.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So, um, slow down. Where did you feel them in the front?

TARYN SLATER: Like lower abs, like pelvis.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. If you were to compare them to say period cramps, were they similar or different?

TARYN SLATER: No, they're different. I know people say it's like intense period cramps, but no, it's like a feeling that I've never felt before. Okay. At that time it didn't feel so, so bad, but it feels like a claw or something like an inside of you, like trying to come out.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, that's probably somewhat accurate. Really not fun.

TARYN SLATER: No.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is that how it was from the beginning? Like right when they started at 1 a.m.

TARYN SLATER: Right. When it started, it wasn't so bad. Like I was able to fall back to sleep, so it wasn't like so bad. But when I woke up and then drew the rest of the day, it like progressively got worse, like more and more intense.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And do you remember what time you woke up?

TARYN SLATER: I woke up probably around eight.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. So would you say like mildly contracting for those seven hours?

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, very mild. Like I would wake up every so often and feel them, but it wasn't the point where it was like keeping me awake or making me feel like, oh my gosh, I need to call my midwife right now. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So at eight o'clock, when you wake up, did the cramping wake you up or that it was just morning?

TARYN SLATER: No, I just woke up on my own. Like it was just like, my body was just time to wake up. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: In your mind, are you like labor has started or are you like, I'm not sure.

TARYN SLATER: I was kind of not sure because I feel like I had had Braxton Hicks before, so I didn't know for sure. Like, okay, is this it or is this just like longer Braxton Hicks? Like I wasn't entirely sure, but once I did wake up, I decided I would maybe I need to start timing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, and do you remember how far apart they were they weren't so consistent it was between like Five minutes apart to like ten minutes apart. Okay, so it wasn't time to do anything quite yet Because it wasn't like every like five minutes consistently or less than that. It was still kind of like jumping around Okay, did you have breakfast?

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, so I woke up and I had breakfast and I was still feeling a little cramping I was pretty calm about it. My husband. I thought was more freaked out Yeah, he kept being like I think we need to call somebody like I can't be the only person here when the baby's coming out So, yeah, he was a little more like I think we need to call someone but I just felt like it's not time yet it was Thanksgiving Day and my parents were gonna come over for Thanksgiving and Yeah, and so I was like, I'm fine, you know whatnot I texted my mom saying like I'm having some like mild contractions, but like nothing crazy and then they did come over My parents came over with like all the Thanksgiving food. Oh, really?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Do they know that you're surging away?

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, my mom knew and I'm sure she told my dad and yeah, they were like over my dad I was like cooking the turkey in the oven My mom was like preparing the sides like they were just doing their whole thing But when they came over it was maybe around like two and I started feeling like more and more like oh my gosh Like this is getting really intense. So is it just the four of you you and your husband your parents? Yes

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, and the baby. So did you eat Thanksgiving?

TARYN SLATER: So they were cooking everything and then at about 345 my water broke. Oh, wow, and the food wasn't quite done yet and I was still like having contractions But they still weren't like so insanely intense. So I didn't think that much of it But once my water broke, I was like, oh, okay, like this is happening. This is not like Braxton hex This is nothing like my old anymore. This is serious Where were you in your water broke? I was in my living room With people around you. Yeah, like my mom was right there. My dad was like in the kitchen So just like right next to the living room and he was like still like working on the food and stuff and yeah It was just crazy and then my mom was like, it's okay cuz I was like freaking out

TARYN SLATER: I was like, oh my gosh, and it was like I've heard people being like yeah in the movies They talk about how it's this huge gush of water, but it was really just like some drips Mine was like a huge gush So no mistaking my water just broke Yes, and then also my midwife had given me these like swab things that to check the food To check the fluid to see like okay, then my like sack break and it did okay

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So I knew for sure like our eight what goes through your head at that point because you've been waiting it for a long time And yes your family's over for Thanksgiving Once your water breaks, it's the point of no return

TARYN SLATER: Labor is coming at that point. I was like, okay This is happening And so I was like I need to text my midwife and my doula and like get them on board that this is happening and I was like excited because I had been waiting so long that at that point it was already 40 weeks and five days So I was like, okay, this is it I was like super excited to meet her and I just kept being like, alright Like making sure everything was prepared for you know When she's about to be here like have my husband blow up the birth pool like get it all situated and everything So yeah, I was excited. I was also like, you know, my contractions were getting more intense after my water broke

TARYN SLATER: So I was just trying to also like breathe through them and like stay calm, you know

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You were planning for a home birth and your family is in your home

TARYN SLATER: Yes, so once it got more intense and Things were getting a little crazy My dad left but my mom stayed because I wanted my mom to stay My daughter to be there in the first place, yes, so so that was part of the plan Yeah, so my mom was gonna be here anyway, but I didn't know it was gonna be happening on Thanksgiving Day It just all happened to be like that way But my dad left and he went out into like just a little like lobby area of the complex So he didn't like leave leave, you know, my mom and my sister both had four hour labors So my dad was like, okay like this shouldn't be like that long. So he was like, I'm just gonna wait

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, I mean I have an important question What's the status of the turkey at this point?

TARYN SLATER: So I think three came out around like four or like 415 Before the baby came out. Yes, and I did eat a tiny bit, but my contractions are getting more intense I didn't eat that much honestly But I had a tiny bit of turkey.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When you called your midwife and doula?

TARYN SLATER: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, were they like, hey, we should come over or call us when it progresses more or like Thanksgiving dinner?

TARYN SLATER: So I called them both right when my water broke. So around like maybe 350 and I told them that my water just broke and whatnot. So the midwife said, let me know when your contractions are like about three to four minutes apart consistently, because at that point they were probably between like five to seven minutes apart. So she wanted to wait till about three to four minutes apart. And then my doula said, let me know when you want me to come. Like she would have come right then, but she said, just let me know when you want me to come. And I was like, I think I could still just kind of do this with just like my husband and my mom right now. So I waited a little bit until they came, not that long though. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And at this point, are you still feeling it all in the lower front?

TARYN SLATER: I'm still feeling it in the lower front, but it feels even more of my front, but I didn't feel it in my back at that point. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And what kinds of things are you doing? Cause it sounds like you kind of hit the ground running with the intensity. So what kind of things are you doing to help you manage the intensity or relax into it?

TARYN SLATER: So I was walking around a lot and I also was on my exercise ball, like the birth ball, so I was on there doing like little circles on it and like rocking back and forth. And yeah, I was doing like some different positions, like squatting down on all fours like that. That's probably what I was doing before everybody had come over at first. I was doing those types of things. I was trying to make sure I was like still moving around just because, you know, I want to make sure like this is happening and that she's going to be ready to just like, come on out. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So is it helping with the intensity?

TARYN SLATER: Um, I think maybe a little bit, but when those contractions came, it's just like so much like, it feels like so intense and it's just so much on your body. It's like, I feel maybe it was helping. I don't know, but it was just so intense. It was hard to focus on anything. Like, is it helping? Is it not helping? I have no idea. It was like, I was in some other world, like as these contractions were going on. Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, it sounds like things are off to a running start and want to find out more, but we're going to take a quick break and be right back. Well, it's off to a beautiful Thanksgiving. We're back with Terrence Slater and she. at this point is having intense labor contractions. Thanksgiving is made, the house smells delicious, dad left the building, and the doula and midwife are in standby. What happens next?

TARYN SLATER: So then, as the contractions are getting closer together, they did start getting between like three to four minutes apart, I had my doula and midwife both come over. So they came over, and it was getting more intense. As they came over, the midwife and her assistant started doing other things like setting more stuff up, they had all of their gear with them. The doula was doing like some massages on me, helping me like feel calm. I did start feeling it in my back, like my lower back. So my doula really helped a lot with like massaging my lower back. She was very calming, like the way she was speaking and the way she was like massaging and whatnot. So that was really nice.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's great.

TARYN SLATER: As the night is progressing, I literally felt almost like I was like dying. Like, it was just so intense. Like, it was unlike anything I've ever experienced. It's the

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: hardest thing I've ever gone through. A question for you. Had they checked your

TARYN SLATER: cervix before you went into labor? So my midwife checked it at the appointment before I went into labor, and I was like one centimeter dilated and 50%

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: effaced. Okay. And do you remember if they measured like how high or low the

TARYN SLATER: baby was in your pelvis? Yes, the baby was at a zero. Zero station? Okay. Yes. And then when they came, not right away, but after a little bit, they checked me again. Like as the contractions were going on and whatnot, they were like constantly, you know, checking the heartbeat, making sure everything was okay. You know, they were having me do different positions and whatnot, because I was in a lot of pain. So I was like on the exercise ball. I was leaned over. The midwife even did the little like robozo, you know, where you're like down and they're kind of like cinching the little thing across your belly.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Shuffling.

TARYN SLATER: Yes. Yeah, like that. I went into the shower and I was in there for a while into the birth pool. Like I was doing everything and they checked my cervix a few times just to see how I was progressing. And I was slowly progressing. I wasn't progressing that fast. I was getting a face. I was like 80%, but the dilation was like slow going,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: like very slow going. But going?

TARYN SLATER: It was going, but it was like, it was slowly going. And once I hit four centimeters, it was pretty much just staying at four centimeters. That was rough.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Did any of the things that you tried to help you kind of cope with that intensity? Like for some people getting in the shower, the bath feels a lot better. For some people,

TARYN SLATER: it doesn't. The shower, I feel definitely helped. And the birth pool, both of them, I feel helped. Like the warm water, I honestly feel the shower helped more than the pool, just because of the water shooting on you. But my midwife was saying that when you go into water, sometimes it will delay the whole process, like the dilation and whatnot. So she didn't want me to stay in the pool or the shower for too long, just because I was so slowly dilating.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Did your doula come in with you to keep doing the massage where you're getting

TARYN SLATER: multiple forms of? Yeah. She was, yeah. So she was there and she was massaging, like when I was in the pool, when I was in the shower, no, it was just my husband in there with me. And I felt a lot better when I was in the shower. But the midwife at one point was like, okay, like we need to try some different things because we needed to progress more.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It sounds like your husband was calm down once the crew arrived.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, he was really nice. I mean, I felt really bad because I feel like I was like some wild animal or something like crazy noises. I was like saying like really crazy things. Like my husband was like, oh my gosh, like this is nuts. It was just madness. But he was there the whole time. So I'm like very thankful for him. When I was in the bathroom, like I would be sitting down because I was like just trying all the things I could possibly try because the pain was so hard. In between the contractions, I would like fall asleep on his shoulder. Yeah, for like 30 seconds or a minute because my contractions were getting like closer and closer together. So I would just be like laying on him for like

TARYN SLATER: one minute and then wake up and be having a contraction like screaming again. But I was trying not to scream. They kept my voice like low and it was just so hard.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Not what you pictured.

TARYN SLATER: No, well, at this point, it had been, they all came over around like six, six. 30 and I was going through the whole night, like it's so long. It had been so many hours at one point it was already over 24 hours. And I was like, Oh my gosh, I was not expecting this. I was expecting that leave to be like my mom and sisters. I thought it was going to be, Oh, was your dad still in the lobby? My dad stayed in the lobby till about midnight. And my mom, I guess was like in constant communication with him and was like, we're still going, like, you should probably go home if you're going to go home because they live about an hour and a half away.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, now I see why he's dead.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah. But it's like either he's going to spend the night in the lobby or like he needs to go home and like, you know, so it was really hard. I was going all night. The matricians were really hard. Like they kept trying to have him like eat. I was barely eating cause I just felt like I couldn't do anything. I felt like I was like in survival mode, like, and I really just felt like I needed to rest. Like I kept falling asleep between contractions. Like I couldn't catch a break. And I just felt like, Oh my gosh, I need to rest or something. But I had been going for so many hours. It was like starting to be like the sun started coming out again. It was just so much.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I wonder a couple of things, cause you know, as a bodybuilder, you kind of push your body very hard through things that are difficult. And it's oftentimes must be a mental challenge for you. To keep going and you have experienced like pushing through that. Was there any parallel here? Did any of that experience feel helpful to you?

TARYN SLATER: You know, I thought it would, cause I thought I would be like in the same mindset of like, okay, I just have to get through this contraction and like just focus on this one right now and that's it, you know? But I just feel in the midst of it. I don't know why, like I felt like I just was not relaxed and I just felt like I was not like, I felt like I was dying. Like I was just not going to make it. I don't know why I just felt like so worn out. It had been so many hours. I felt like unlike anything I've ever experienced in my life, like no comparison to anything.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And when you were dilating really slowly through that, I'm sure every time you checked, you expected more progress. So it becomes kind of a psychological let down.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah. I kept like just being like, okay, it's all right. I'm going to get there. I'm doing it. But after it had been over 24 hours and I still was at four centimeters, I kept thinking in my head, like, what am I not doing right? And I was seeing it too. I was like, I don't understand what I'm doing. Like, what am I not doing right? Everybody was like, it's fine. You're doing everything you need to do. You know, it just takes time. But I was thinking in my head, like, how much time does this take? This has already taken so long.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: 20 hours longer than you expected. Way, way already. And you're at four centimeters.

TARYN SLATER: Yes. I just kept thinking how much longer I'm going to have to do this for. Like, oh my gosh, like I'm already into the next day. It was already like, you know, Friday at this point. And I'm like, oh my gosh, what's happening now. And it was like a crack of dawn. What's happening now is everybody's shopping.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yes, everyone is shopping.

TARYN SLATER: It's black Friday.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yes. Not you.

TARYN SLATER: No, not me. I'm like, I just wanted her to come out so bad. Like I was like, can she just please come out? Like she needs to just come out. What is going on? Why is she not coming out? Like it was just so intense.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You said that you really didn't feel like you were relaxing.

TARYN SLATER: No.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So does that mean you were fighting?

TARYN SLATER: I don't know. I feel like things were like throwing me off. Like I would be like in the motion and then I feel like when they would check for the heartbeat, I would like be like a little thrown off because it'd be like, okay, I'm having a contraction, but I need to make sure I'm in the right position so that they can check the heartbeat correctly. And like, I don't know. I just kept getting like not being able to stay in like the rhythm. Yeah. So when that would happen, if your contractions come and you're not able to relax, do you feel your body like tensing up? Yeah, I feel I was like more tense and I was also just like in more of like a stressed mindset, I guess, because it's like, I'm already kind of tired.

TARYN SLATER: I'm already stressed that like I'm not progressing more. And then on top of it, they keep checking. So I'm not like in the mindset of like, okay, let me just focus on this. It's like, okay, let me focus on being in the right position so they can find the heartbeat. So it was a lot.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So at some point you got to alter the plan. What happens?

TARYN SLATER: Yeah. So it was now like seven in the morning and I still was not progressed. It had now been like 30 hours and I just said, I need to go to the hospital. I was like, I don't want to but I need to I was like, I cannot relax. I'm so like out of it. I can't relax. I need to relax. I said I want the epidural. I said I should have listened to my mom. My mom had us all three ways. She had my brother's C section, me natural, my sister with the epidural and she always said just get the epidural. But I really wanted to do my home birth like it was just pictured in my head so much like this home birth and this water birth and this like, being so beautiful and healthy for my baby but I just was not progressing and my

TARYN SLATER: midwife also was like, we're still not progressing and also thought it was probably a good idea for me to go or at least we could try a little bit longer but there was just no

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: progression going on. So the hospital from where you were

TARYN SLATER: with the hospitals about 25 minutes but as we're driving there, my mom calls the hospital to see if she could also come because I wanted my mom and my husband there but you know, a lot of hospitals only let one person. Correct. Yeah. So she calls the hospital and they say, Oh, they're on their way here right now. And mom was like, Yes. And the lady on the phone was like, Oh, tell them not to come. We're at full capacity and get good care here. And I was like, Oh, my god. So my mom called us as we're driving to the hospital and was like, you guys need to divert. They're not accepting people. She said you guys aren't gonna get good care there. And I'm like, what? And I'm like screaming in the cars. I'm still having contractions.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And you didn't want to go to the hospital in the first place.

TARYN SLATER: Yes. And I was like, Oh, my gosh. So she's like, here's these other three that you can choose from that they're like, you know, collaborating with like have this, you know, contract with or whatever. So there was one in the next city over. So I was like, we're just gonna go to that one. Because the other ones were like way further away. So I was like, we're just gonna go to that one. So now we're on our way to a hospital we've never been to. And we know nothing about we don't even know where the labor and delivery is like nothing. And we get there and we just go to the emergency. And I like walk into the emergency door and I'm like screaming. And the guy at the front is like, what's wrong? What's

TARYN SLATER: going on? And I was like, I'm in labor, like I need to deliver this baby, blah, blah, blah. And he like takes me up to the labor and delivery. But we're not in the system. So they're like, we need you to fill out all this paperwork. No. Yeah, they're like, we need to have you do a test so that we see that you're negative for COVID like all these things. And I was like, I just want to rest like I just want the epidural. And they're like, we're sorry, like you have to go through all this stuff before we can do anything. Yeah. So then it was another like two hours until anything could be done because I wasn't in the system.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So the whole time you're just like struggling. Yes. You know, you hit your breaking point or you wouldn't have gone to the hospital. Yes. And now you're there. And it's like being right outside a KFC on a diet day.

TARYN SLATER: Yes. And I kept being like, the guy who was going to give the epidural was like, can you please just come in and just do it? Like I need to just rest. I can't even like focus blah, blah, blah. And they're like, we need to get the results back and the results back. We're taking forever.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: From a COVID test?

TARYN SLATER: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, what would they do if you tested positive kick you out?

TARYN SLATER: I have no idea. That's what I said, too. I was like, does it even matter? Like, I don't understand. But anyways, I tested negative and it was all fine. And then the guy came in and gave me the epidural. And I did not like from the beginning, like I did not want the epidural. I didn't want to go to the hospital. Like none of it. Like my whole plan just like went out the window, completely out the window. But I got the epidural and then I fell asleep. So it was like really nice because I was actually

able to sleep. And when I woke up, my mom was there. So they let my mom come.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, nice.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah. So my mom was there. My husband was already there with me and everybody there was actually like super nice. There wasn't that many people there that day.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: They're all at the other hospital.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah. It was just crazy. We couldn't even go to our own hospital. I was like, this is like no room at the end situation.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When your epidural started to kick in. Yeah. What did that feel like physically and mentally?

TARYN SLATER: So when it kicked in, like I could feel it first in my toes. It felt like numbing, like tingling kind of, and then, and like warm and then up my legs. And then it was just not completely, but it was like pretty numb and you could move your legs kind of, but not really. Like I felt very heavy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. But as the contractions kept coming, did they start to feel like more and more tolerable?

TARYN SLATER: So yeah, it was more and more tolerable. And then to the point where like, I literally couldn't even feel them. So it was nice because I couldn't feel them anymore. And I had already been feeling them for 32 hours at that point.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow.

TARYN SLATER: And yeah. it was so intense and long. And then it just like went away and I was actually able to relax, which I feel is what I needed because I did take that two-hour nap. And then when I woke up,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I was seven centimeters. Oh, wow. Things started to move along. All right. This sounds like a wonderful place for a break. And then we'll come back and find out the rest of this interesting story. We'll be right back with Terrence later. Well, if you're just tuning in, Taryn was planning for this beautiful unmedicated home birth in a birthing pool in the bliss and joy of her house surrounded by loved ones like her husband and her mother and her midwife and her doula. After a very long time of intense contractions, she went for plan B and drove to the hospital, which wasn't taking any new people. So she went to a different hospital and had to register. And after waiting for two hours was finally able to get an epidural

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and fall asleep. Then she wakes up and her mom is there. What happens next?

TARYN SLATER: So I wake up, I progressed. So I was really happy about that. And I just was like, I just needed to rest and relax. So I'm really happy. So I was at seven centimeters and the doctor said that she wanted to come back again in two hours and see that I had gone at least to eight centimeters. And at that point, she also talked to me just in case I wasn't going to be progressing anymore. She did talk to me about C-section, but it was like out of everything, I was like, I do not want

to go through C-section. Like out of all this stuff, I wanted this home birth and this natural unmedicated thing. The last thing I want is to go all the way to a C-section now. But she told me about it and wanted me to be

TARYN SLATER: informed about it just in case it got to that point. So it's good. She did talk about that, but my mom was there and my mom was like, we're going to make sure like we push this so that you can have your natural birth. We push this baby up. Was this doctor someone you had met before? No, I've never met anyone here. So I never met the doctor, the nurses, no one, but everyone was super nice and they were very not busy that day. Somebody had asked either my mom or my husband, and there was only two other people there that were delivering. And one had already delivered with a C-section and the other one was doing like a natural birth as well. So I felt like I was getting like very attended to. So I'm glad.

TARYN SLATER: Yes, I'm really glad we didn't end up at our own hospital that was like impacted because I don't know if they would have been like, we just need to go do the C-section right now or what would have happened. So I feel happy that it ended up the way how it ended up.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Cool. And your mom was there, but your midwife and doula, I assume weren't allowed to come with

TARYN SLATER: you. Right. Yeah. So they let my mom and my husband there, but no one else. Okay. Were you like virtual with your doula or just not there? Not there at all. No, just my mom and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: husband. So my other question is, did the staff at the hospital know that this was like

TARYN SLATER: a home birth transfer? Yes, they did. My midwife actually called and she talked to the doctor. So my midwife and doctor talked to each other. They knew the hospital was a little concerned also because at that point my water had been broken for over 24 hours now. So they were a little concerned about it being 24 hours. Like I was at seven at that point now, but they wanted just to see me get further along so that everything would be okay. But they're monitoring baby's heartbeat the whole time and like everything was okay in regards to the heartbeat. So they were like, that's okay. You are progressing. So we're just going to give it a little more time. Okay. What happens next? So then I fell to sleep again and it was two

TARYN SLATER: hours later and the doctor came in to check again. And I was like, Oh my goodness, I hope I'm just at eight because I don't want to have to go through if I needed to do c-section or whatnot. So she checked and she's like, okay, you're at a 10. Oh yeah. So I was like finally ready to go. And at this point it was 5 30 PM and I was ready. Yeah. So it was a really long time. It was 5 30 PM now on Friday. And she's like, okay, we're going to start pushing

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: now. Could you feel your legs and your pelvis with the epidural? I couldn't feel, but I

TARYN SLATER: could feel a lot of pressure. Okay. So much pressure. So at this point I couldn't feel the contractions of like the pain of like, that it felt like somebody was trying to like claw their way out of me, but I could feel when a contraction was coming, the pressure of it. Okay. So I could feel

exactly when to push. And I knew exactly when the contraction was coming. I was like, okay, it's coming right now. And then I would push and the pressure and stuff was also like, Not comfortable. Like it wasn't the same pain as the contractions, but it was still like a pain of pressure, like very intense pressure.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So you can feel the pressure and are you stuck position wise in any particular position or did you have the flexibility to move around somewhat?

TARYN SLATER: I could move a little bit in regards to like how my legs were going to be positioned, but not to the point where it could be like, Oh, I'm going to stand up and like squat or go on all fours. I couldn't do that. It was like, I was on my back and I was like, my legs were going different ways. So first it was just the normal, like legs up with the stirrup. And then I thought maybe I would be able to push her out, you know, in a few pushes or something. It took me a long time. This whole thing was just so long. So I was trying in all these different positions, two people were on the side to me, like pushing my legs, like all the way in. So I was like in a little ball, like I would like bring my head up to my chest

TARYN SLATER: and my legs were like all the way back. And I was pushing as hard as I could. My husband said my face was like as red as a tomato, the blood vessels, like around my eyes broke total. I got like punched in the face, like two black eyes. Like, it was so intense and they brought a mirror so I could like see cause I could like see her little hair and then, yeah, it was crazy. Like I can see like a little bit of her head, but it would be like, okay, pushing them and like go back and then pushing them.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, so you could see in the mirror while you were pushing.

TARYN SLATER: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That the head would come down.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When you stop pushing back inside.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah. Like it was, it was like slowly progressing. So like her head was getting like slowly and slowly like coming out more and more, but it was like three steps forward and like two back and then like two packs, like that type of thing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Was seeing that helpful for you?

TARYN SLATER: It was like cool to see it for a little bit, but I only did that for maybe like two or three of the pushes. And then I was like, I needed to like close my eyes and push as hard as I can and like, just focus on that. I couldn't like open my eyes and look at the mirror. So I was like, forget the mirror. I need to just focus just on the pushing aspect of this. I was like, I can't look or like be distracted by anything else. And at one point when I was pushing, she was like, reach your hand down and I could like feel her head and her hair and everything. I was like, oh my gosh. So that was crazy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Was it cool or crazy?

TARYN SLATER: It was cool, but it was also like, okay, I can't do this. I need to just focus on the push. Okay. Like I couldn't do anything else except like close my eyes and just focus. Like I wanted to feel her and everything, but it's just like, I knew if I was doing that, I wasn't focusing so much on the pushing. That was like, I need to focus, focus. And it took me two and a half hours of pushing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow.

TARYN SLATER: So it was a long labor and a long pushing time, but I didn't have to do the C-section and she finally popped out after two and a half hours of pushing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What went through your mind and body at that moment?

TARYN SLATER: So I was pushing and then she was like, okay, take a breath. And then she's like, Oh no, the baby has other plans. Keep pushing. And then she came right on out. And then they just put her right on me. And I was like, I felt like very relieved. Like I was like, Oh my gosh, like she's actually here. I actually pushed her out. Like she's here. And I was like excited and she's here. And I like hear her a little cry and I see her and I'm like, Oh my gosh, like it felt just unreal. And it was just like, wow. The one thing that was kind of a bummer is I did want to do the placenta encapsulation and I did also want to do the delayed cord clamping. But I got a one oh two fever and like, as I was pushing and baby girl also got a little fever.

TARYN SLATER: So my placenta encapsulator was like, we can't do it because my fever was so high and they couldn't do the cord clamping because the fever. So that was kind of a bus.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: A lot of your plans, but you know, when I talked to you before you gave birth, you did mention that there was some flexibility in your plan. Not necessarily like for this, but you did say like, if the baby needed anything and you would definitely go to the hospital and you'd be fine with that, like that was your priority.

TARYN SLATER: So yeah, just like her health was the most important. I really didn't want at all to do the hospital or medication or anything like that. Like I was so like, no, we're just doing it at home. Even if she's even more late, like my husband's just going to do it. Like I was really about just doing it at home, but when it came down to it, it was like, I'm not progressing. It's been 30 hours now we're at the hospital and I'm have this fever. I'm not going to cause anything bad because of all the stuff that's happened. So I just kind of rolled with it, you know, and it was okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Good. I mean, it's good to hear.

TARYN SLATER: I didn't have to just see section, which I was really happy about. I mean, the thing that was nice is that the doctor did explain it all to me. So if it was going to come to that, like I knew what was going on and I would have just had to be okay with it and deal with it, which was fine. But I'm just glad I finally after two and a half hours pushed her out.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, congratulations. I mean, you really worked for this one.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, it was 44 hours total. It was so crazy. Yeah. All right.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So a few questions. First of all, how is motherhood?

TARYN SLATER: It's actually not really good. I really thought I was going to get no sleep, but I get between like eight to 10 hours. Oh, wow. It's really nice. But it's just because my husband, he'll stay up all night with her and he'll just like wake me up to like nurse her. But I'll fall asleep while I'm nursing her. But he'll like watch it once she's done. He'll like take her in like Berber and change her and stuff. So like it's really sweet. Yeah, it's been super nice. I'm really nervous when it goes back to work, how it's all going to go. But as of right now, it's been great.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And did nursing come naturally to you?

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, something that was really cool at the hospital. They gave us an hour when she came out of like skin to skin time before they did like a bunch of stuff, like they did take her and clean her off because as soon as she came out, she pooped like immediately. So it was like all over her. So they like, yeah, get right to business. Yeah, they cleaned her off and stuff. But then after that, they gave her to me and she nursed like right away. Like she latched on right away. So that was super nice. And then nursing has been great ever since. There was just one time when my milk came in and I didn't know like what was going on. And she was getting really frustrated. Like every time she was trying, she was like sad.

TARYN SLATER: And I was getting sad because she was sad. So I FaceTime my doula because I was like, what is going on? And I thought she maybe wasn't getting anything. I was like so concerned she wasn't getting anything. And my doula was like, your milk probably came in and she's getting too much. Like it's like a rush going from like colostrum to the milk coming in. And I was like, oh, OK, so on the FaceTime, the doula helped me with like a certain way to latch her so that she was maybe like not getting it like all over, like just flooded in her mouth or whatever. And then ever since then, it's been fine. So it's just like the one time.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I bet that's something that happens to a lot of people until you realize what's going on.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, I really was like so nervous. I was like, is she not getting anything? She's not eating. I don't know what's going on. And I was like crying, you know, just like so concerned. And then after that, she was totally fine. And I was like, OK, everything's OK. It's just I don't like to see her sad.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, yeah, of course. Yeah. Did you tear?

TARYN SLATER: Yes, unfortunately. And I'm telling you, I did everything to start helping with inducing labor. And I did everything to help with preventing tearing. And it's like nothing worked. She was a 44 hours. She was six days late. Forty four hour labor pushing took forever. And I tore to a two. So it wasn't too bad because it was a two. They said that was like average, I guess. But I mean, I don't want to tear at all. No tearing sounds awful. Yeah, seriously. I was like, oh, my gosh. But honestly, recovery has been fine. The first week was hard. I was like waddling around. I thought I was just supposed to kind of like lounge around and take it easy. And my mom was like, you need to be up and walking.

TARYN SLATER: You need to make sure your blood is circulating and you're healing quicker. So I was like, oh, what? So like literally my mom was there. And the next morning I had her eight p.m. And

in the morning, the next day, my mom was like, you need to walk. So I was like up and walking, waddling around. I was like, oh, my gosh. And she's like, even if you just walk for a little bit, you just need to walk around and get the blood circulating. So I was like, all right. So my mom stayed with us for 11 days and every day she walked with me. And then it got easier and easier. At day 10, I was like feeling really good. Like I felt like I could walk pretty normal and I can like actually sit down more.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, those are good things. Yeah. Like great goals.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, I really didn't want to have to go through this crazy, intense recovery. So I'm glad my mom was there. She helped a lot and she helped me with the recovery. And I didn't do anything crazy. Like, I don't know if other people do like super crazy things for recovery or not. I have no idea. But I just did my walking and I took every six hours, like ibuprofen to help with like the pain and whatnot. And then I use like those ice pads to hold things and to go, yep.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. Now the baby's a couple of weeks old.

TARYN SLATER: Yeah, today's 18 days.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: 18 days. Wow. It's so fresh. Before you got pregnant and during your pregnancy, you were really active and you're very athletic. body. Sometimes that can delay things in labor, but also you tend to bounce back a lot quicker. How has your experience been with that?

TARYN SLATER: So within the 14 day mark, I was back to my size before pregnancy, except for the fact like just my ab muscles are not popping out.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well that makes two of us except for being back to our original size before pregnancy. That's incredible. Two weeks to like shrink back down to your pre-pregnancy size is very, very quick. And that's when your body's really strong and the muscles are really developed. That's when that usually happens. So part of your plan worked.

TARYN SLATER: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Are you looking forward to getting back to the hardcore working out? Do you miss it or you're like, oh, I got to like build up again. It kind of reminds me of writing an essay before we had Google docs and stuff. And then the computer like blows out before you save it. And you have to start all over again.

TARYN SLATER: Oh my gosh. Yes. I am excited to get back to it. I've missed it. I really missed training. I missed lifting weights. So I'm excited to like get back to it. I'm excited to see how my body does getting back into it. Like how the whole journey will be.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That is so crazy. That sounds like a cliffhanger for a third episode. Yeah, we shall see. I think we'll do that. Well, last two questions. One is from the whole experience, is there anything that you learned by going through it that you couldn't really have learned another way? And part B of that question is if you have another baby, has this experience shaped what you would plan for birth the next time?

TARYN SLATER: So definitely I would say this helped me to realize that even if you do everything you possibly can to have your labor start or have a short labor or to not tear or anything like that, it's just going to happen how it's going to happen. Like the baby is going to come and the baby is ready to come. And you can be preventative as possible, but it's still possible that you're going to tear or things are going to go awry. And through that, I think I just learned to be flexible and to be strong in the way of not being stressed or worried that things are not going the way you planned it from the beginning, but just to go with the flow and do what's best for your own health and your baby's health. Like even if

TARYN SLATER: it's something completely a hundred percent different than what you wanted from the beginning. So that's powerful. Yeah, I definitely learned that. And that was hard, but you know, I feel maybe it was something that it's like, I just needed to learn. I don't know, but I've learned it now. And I do want to have more, even though I feel my labor and birth was somewhat traumatizing. I do want to have more in the future. I don't want to just have an only child. I don't think there's anything wrong with just only child, but I do want to have another baby. And we're thinking about maybe in a couple of years, trying again, we'll see. But I do want to take some time off to just relax. And I do want to also get

TARYN SLATER: back to working out and my fitness and whatnot. So I just kind of want to see how all that goes before having baby number two. And through this experience, I won't do the home birth again. As soon as my water breaks, I'm just going to go to the hospital.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, that's fair. We just did an episode recently where in her first birth, she was planning a vaginal birth and ended up having a C-section. On her second birth, she was just planning to have another C-section and ended up with a vaginal birth. And then she had the vaginal birth and it was a great experience for her. She decided to have a vaginal birth with the third, but that turned into a C-section. So you just strike me as like, okay, the second one tends to be a lot easier, faster, quicker. You're pretty tough. You're probably going to wait too long and deliver at home by accident. That's just my prediction. We'll see what happens. Oh my gosh. Who knows? How crazy would that be?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh my gosh. That would be hilarious. That actually happens. Taryn, you're an amazing human. Thank you for joining me and just sharing so open and honest. You know, it was an experience, but you just look so beaming and happy. It's your nature to take things in stride. But you know, I think that this experience for you probably prepares you for anything that comes down the road. Because usually when people ask for like, what do I think about a birth plan? I'm like, make page one the most natural birth you could see yourself wanting to try to have and make sure there's more pages behind that. Because, you know, once the journey starts, you're trying to steer a hot air balloon and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: the wind can blow this way or that way. And you're taking a different path to the same destination. Yep. Okay. Cause you have amazing bodybuilding stuff. Where can we find you online?

TARYN SLATER: You can find me on Instagram, Taryn Slater Fitness, and also my website, tarynslaterfitness.com.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. So easy to remember.

TARYN SLATER: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Brilliant. Thank you. Hopefully, I'll see you soon and be part of your postpartum recovery. And then two years down the road I'm already saving some time to work with you prenatally. Thanks so much again. And at home, thanks for listening to our podcasts. You're amazing too. And if you want to connect with us in any way, visit us on Instagram at Dr. Berlin. It's D-O-C-T-O-R-B-E-R-L-I-N.

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