

# Pitocin: Nurses Broke Hospital Rules, Large Verdict For Patients.

The patient was admitted to the hospital as scheduled for childbirth.

She was two weeks past due, her water had broken and her labor had begun.

She and her husband at least twice expressly declined the hospital's nurse midwife's recommendation that pitocin be started, based on negative information about pitocin they were given in their natural childbirth class.

## **Pitocin Given Over Patient's Objections**

The hospital's nurse midwife told the couple that their obstetrician had ordered pitocin and she was going to give it even though they had twice declined. At this point the mother was several hours into her labor with sixty- to ninety-second contractions at five- to seven-minute intervals.

## **Failure of Nursing Communication**

There was an apparent breakdown in communication between the nurse midwife and the obstetric nurse. Each of them separately seemed to have carried out what they believed to be the physician's order to increase the pitocin hourly until adequate labor had been achieved.

## **Nurses Violated Hospital's Pitocin Rules**

The hospital's own policies for administration of pitocin called for its discontinuance if contractions became more frequent than every two minutes or became tetanic. The pitocin was continued, however, and gradually increased, more than three hours after the mother's uterine contractions had become hyperstimulated.

The fetal heart rate became ominously slow and the baby was delivered by emergency c section.

The jury in the Circuit Court, Lee County, Florida, returned a verdict in excess of \$30 million for the family based on the severe cerebral palsy which the child now suffers. [Edwards v. Lee Memorial Health System](#), 2007 WL 1096898 (Fla. Cir., February 28, 2007).