



Pregnancy  
Sickness  
Support

### **HG Truths with Michelle Owen**

*Sky Sports Presenter and Pregnancy Sickness Support Charity Ambassador Michelle Owen talks about her HG Experience and why she is taking part in this years PSS 40 day challenge to raise awareness of Hyperemesis Gravidarum and Pregnancy Sickness Support services, and all important donations so that the charity can continue its life changing work.*



*In 2019 I was pregnant for just a week before I started being sick. We assumed it was morning sickness and had never heard of HG. It got to the point where I couldn't even rinse my mouth out without being sick. No one took me seriously, no one acknowledged in those first few weeks what it could be despite seeing numerous doctors and begging for help. Finally I was admitted to hospital with an enlarged bladder, severe dehydration and unable to walk I was so weak. Thankfully my husband spoke for me and I got some treatment and anti-sickness tablets but they made little difference, I was admitted to hospital several times over the next few months. It was a horrible cycle of dread as I got worse and worse as soon as I got home knowing we had to make that car journey, to be met with nurses offering me ginger.*

*Through the power of Google I found PSS. I was paired with a buddy who would WhatsApp me and help me through the awful days. She actually understood as she'd been there herself. The battle aside from the horrendous sickness and constant nausea was the ignorance of medical professionals offering me ginger not offering treatment or rehydration. On reflection it was truly shocking. Our NHS is wonderful but something needs to be done to help women. One nurse told me a story of a lady who at 20 weeks couldn't even lift her head off the pillow and had a termination. That same nurse ignored me when I said people eating food in the bed next to me was making me sick. However I'll never forget those who helped me, a nurse called Grace was so kind on one of my last admissions to St Michael's. Before there's been snide comments about trying out all the beds as I'd been there so much, I have a scar on my hand from where someone tried and failed with a cannula as I was so dehydrated. Another time blood went all over me when they couldn't get the cannula in, it was traumatic. I explained to Grace how there'd been problems before, she was so gentle and kind and understanding.*

*I absolutely adore being Zac's Mum, he's 18 months now and the questions come "when are you having another, do you want another?"*

*He is the best thing ever and I wish it was as simple as wanting another baby and having one- but it's just not a reality for us. Those months were hard enough without a small person in the equation to care for. I feel very lucky to have him, to do it all again would take me away from him. There's been after effects too, my coccyx is damaged and painful every day from the time I spent bed bound, every period brings nausea and every-time I feel sick or unwell I feel panicked at the thought of HG. I also feel nervous to leave Zac with anyone but my husband, covid hasn't helped with this but he's never*

*been away from us. I feel like it was only me who could get through HG and bring him here safely so it's going to be hard to trust anyone to take care of him.*

*HG sufferers have 100 x the levels of nausea and sickness than someone battling through chemotherapy. It's hard to comprehend if you've not been through it but imagine your worst ever hangover every moment of every day for weeks and months. Some well meaning people say "like what Kate Middleton had?" While this is true her medical care would have been far more accessible, HG is not fashionable or something you can post about on social media while suffering with make up on and selfies. I have very few photos of that time but they're all of me in bed or in hospital up-to 20 weeks. Only then could I function on 9 anti- sickness tablets a day.*

*I promised myself I'd do something to raise awareness when clinging to my bedsheets trying to block out the nausea in the darkness day after day night after night. So this is just us trying to give a little something back, and raise awareness. My husband was truly amazing- he thought it was morning sickness for a few days until he realised it was something very serious and supported me the whole way from picking me up from the pavement outside the doctors as I was sick to being understanding when I said I just couldn't be near anyone for days shut in our bedroom, unable to bare any conversation or movement near me. He's pushing Zac, he's doing the tough part this time! I hate running but it won't be as bad as the utter hell of my pregnancy. We have our amazing boy, but many don't make it through. So we have to make sure more people are supported, heard and don't have to go through this ordeal alone.*

You can show your support for Michelle, Adam and Zac here:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/MichelleOwen8>

You can watch Michelle talking to Pregnancy Sickness Support about her HG Experiences here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiB2OTMgjLw>