



Pregnancy
Sickness
Support



HG Truths with Susie Verrill

Hello My name's Susie, I'm a mum of three and influencer.

Why is raising awareness about HG important to you?

Trying to spread the word about HG is important to me because I hate the idea of women suffering alone. I felt incredibly isolated during my first experience and a huge part of helping you feel at least mentally more stable, is feeling others sympathise with what you're going through even if they can't fully understand all the intricacies. To so many people, understandably, HG isn't something on their radar. So be able to make it common knowledge that, actually, with the joy of pregnancy can come a condition as debilitating as this one will be beneficial to so many women. There's a big hope too that with more exposure and understanding comes an improvement in support offered by healthcare professionals too and that's the biggest priority to me.

Tell us how your HG experience started

Each time I've suffered, acute nausea began bang-on week 6 with vomiting beginning around week 8-9. Despite taking preventative measures such as going on Stage 1 medication ahead of nausea setting in, this has always been the pattern for me.

With my first experience of HG the care was terrible. I couldn't advocate for myself because I was just too unwell keep visiting the doctors and sit in hospital waiting rooms ahead of being placed on drips; it took for me to pay to see a private doctor via video link to be rushed through as an emergency patient. The doctor had herself suffered and could recognise I really needed help.

With my latest pregnancy I told doctors ahead of time I was intending on conceiving and requested medication to take from when I had a positive test. I was put under the care of a team of doctors who had a particular interest in women's health during pregnancy and they enabled me to have access to Ondansetron and the dosage I needed. At one point another doctor became involved purely by accident and put a stop to the medication for a weekend. I suffered terribly, requiring a hospital visit and it just goes to show how little some people understand when it comes to the condition.

How did it impact your day-to-day life?

In every way. When you're asked to describe HG, it's almost impossible to convey just how hard it is. The thought of vomiting excessive amounts a day sounds horrible and of course it is, but it's all the additional symptoms on top of that which push you to the brink.

The nausea is often worse than the vomiting itself; I suffered with ulcers, a permanent, awful metallic taste in my mouth, cold sores, my hair fell out, excessive exhaustion, my skin flaking off. I swung from having aggressive aversions to all food and drink to desperately craving something obscure. My iron levels were non-existent due to my diet which meant I needed B12 injections and iron transfusions (later on in the pregnancy). Your sense of smell is heightened to the point scents you've never even noticed before set you off vomiting. Fresh air, my children, carpets, going from one room to another. Life is almost impossible for months on end because you're in a constant cycle of just trying to exist without setting off your symptoms. I personally wasn't able to wash my hair for weeks on end and tooth brushing was only do-able every 4/5 days so I'm now left with dental issues. It's a dreadful existence. You feel entirely redundant.

What was the hardest part?

More than anything I missed my other children terribly. I just wanted get back to normal and be able to spend time with them without needing to retreat back to bed. The guilt of being a hindrance to your family and friends is so strong but there's quite literally nothing you can do about it. It's the only illness I've had where it's been so extreme attempting the whole 'mind over matter' mentality just doesn't work. There were times if someone had put a million pounds downstairs and told me I could have it if I could walk there, I'd have turned them down.

What do you wish people knew about HG?

That women aren't exaggerating how extreme it is. That HG can cause serious mental health problems. And that there's a huge difference between sickness in pregnancy and hyperemesis.

What did recovery look like for you?

The recovery's been different with each experience but I had to take medication up to the day I gave birth with my latest pregnancy and can happily say I felt normal as soon as my daughter was out. With my previous pregnancy I only needed to stay on medication 'til month 6 and enjoyed the remainder which I was incredibly grateful for. Both times I've been left with dental problems, mental health issues and shocking iron levels. And I consider myself lucky to be honest; there are women who've suffered far, far worse.

What is your message for anyone else suffering?

Make sure you have someone who can advocate for you because you certainly shouldn't be expected to do it yourself. Please know you're not alone, that one day you'll look back and realise how strong you were. And to use Pregnancy Sickness Support because they're an invaluable resource and truly lovely people.