

9 Months of HG HELL – Toni – Michelle Mallen



My Name Is Toni & I'm A HG Survivor! I recently became a volunteer with an amazing charity that helps raise money and awareness for an illness that sadly affects many pregnant women all around the world every single day - I was 1 of those woman.

HG robbed me of so much I was only 20 when I first fell pregnant with my oldest daughter who is almost 5. I was young happy & most of all healthy. I'd just finished hairdressing college and was enjoying building on my career working a 5 day week including late nights at my local salon where I'd been working since I was 15 - I enjoyed every minute especially the social side - meeting & talking to new people regularly - I love to talk!

In those first few weeks of pregnancy everything was what I call now 'perfect' however at 7 weeks that quickly changed. I still remember the 1st time I was sick - morning sickness - as clear as day. I was actually excited - as apart from a positive pee stick and a missed period I'd no other signs I was expecting so this made me feel like a proper pregnant woman - sounds silly but I thought it at the time! However my morning sickness didn't stop I was sick all day long I spent most of my day at work hiding out the back crying being sick feeling sick feeling scared and when I got home I spent all my time in bed only getting up to use the toilet and of course to be sick. Within 2 weeks I was so bad I was sent to A&E with a letter from my doctor. That's when I 1st started to realise this was going to be a long road. I was pregnant being violently sick, so much so I'd ripped my insides causing blood to pour out of my mouth every time - I was petrified - I was crying non-stop yet I was made to sit there for over 8 hours before I was seen, I could barely sit up in bed most days let alone sit in A&E for 8hours!

I remember lying on the cold tile floors of the hospital toilets alone thinking I was going to die and that no1 even cared. When I finally got admitted over 11 hours after I first arrived I was diagnosed with Hyperemesis Gravidarum - WHAT? That's what I thought to? I've never even heard those words let alone no what they mean - Did anyone explain - no!

At the time I was too ill to care too sick to ask questions but when I think back now it makes me angry! Why did no-one give me any information on the illness & why did no-one tell me that it wasn't my fault or if my baby was going to be ok!

Next thing I knew I was being injected by an anti-sickness medicine called cyclizine within minutes I felt the room spin & my face swell yet after me voicing my concerns I was injected again only this time the reaction was much worse leaving me un able to see properly for 24 hours

because my face had swollen so much! Turns out I'm allergic!

With all this going on I didn't realise that I had been isolated to a private room and that everyone coming in was wearing protective clothing & masks at first I thought it was just a normal part of being hospitalised with HG that was until my mum started to ask questions and it's as well she did or I might have never found out that I had tested positive for swine flu - I didn't even know I had been tested - and was classed high risk for having it due to my pregnancy or that now I had an 80% chance of miscarriage!

Again at the time I was too sick to care but again when I look back I feel angry! The hospital never wanted me to find out and if my mum hadn't mentioned about going to the local papers I believe I would have never been told I had caught swine flu from my 11 hour wait in A&E! At that moment I felt broken, my life had turned upside down & I remember thinking I was somewhat weak and that I didn't deserve to have a baby grow inside me because I couldn't cope with pregnancy.

The next lot of months went by in a blur filled with lots of sickness, hospital visits, scans, medications, sadness feeling alone and more sickness!

I also found out pregnancy was causing so much strain on 1 of my kidneys that only 70% of it was now working, Not how pregnancy should be!

I was signed off work and spent all my time alone in my apartment wishing I would just die already! I couldn't stop being sick for long enough to think of anything like if I was growing a little baby girl or boy inside me or what names I liked I was living breathing sleeping HG there was no escape & I felt like it was never going to end. When I went into labour 2 weeks before my due date I didn't feel scared I just wanted to in my words 'get this baby out of me' Scarlett was born by natural delivery on 29th July 2011 weighing 6 pound 1ounce and I vowed to never ever, ever to be pregnant again! That was until I began life as a mother!

Scarlett became my light at the end of the tunnel. Here was this beautiful baby girl that had grown inside of me despite how ill I was & I made a promise to her and myself that I would be the best mummy I could be and I would give her a better life than the one she had started inside me. I knew I wanted more children but the thought of being pregnant again scared me more than I've ever been scared before. How could I willingly get pregnant knowing I could be setting myself up for another 9 months of HG HELL with little or no help from anyone even health professionals - at this point I didn't know about PSS.

It took a lot of thought before I finally decided to try for another baby and the main reason I did is because of the what ifs what if I don't get HG this time what if I have a normal pregnancy.

After only 2 months I found out I was pregnant with my youngest daughter who is now almost 1 - I was so excited but terrified!

Like before the 1st few weeks were 'perfect' then boom just like before I was hit like a ton of bricks and my what ifs turned to as ifs. I remember speaking to a doctor in the hospital who was looking over my notes she was wearing glasses and sort of moved them down her nose then with a disapproving look said "so planned pregnancy then Toni" I felt like she'd just punched me in the face! Just because I'd planned to have a baby didn't make the HG easier if anything it made it worse because I kept thinking what have I done!

Having HG and looking after a hyper 4 year old was an actual living nightmare simple tasks like making her breakfast became a daily struggle and I still feel guilty that for 9 months she didn't really have her mummy because I wasn't me I was HG ME and that she would ask me questions like 'mummy are you going to die'?

I also still feel guilty that at one point it got too much for me so much so that I was set to abort the baby I'd once longed for because I felt I couldn't go on!

HG is a lot more than just sickness. It physically emotionally and mentally drains you - I even suffered from nose bleeds and migraines in my second pregnancy as a result of my HG.

It takes away all things good in life and makes you have thoughts you would never dream you would have.

I'm very thankful my family supported me enough to continue my pregnancy and that I went on to give birth again naturally to another healthy baby girl Bonnie born 21st September 2015 weighing 6pounds 11ounces, it's sad that because of HG the first feeling I felt when I set eyes on my gorgeous girl was guilt - then love - guilt because growing her made me so ill that at one point I was so sure I didn't want a baby inside me anymore - sometimes I still look at her little face and feel that little bit of guilt!

She is the light at the end of my tunnel together her and Scarlett are my absolute world I live breath and sleep for my girls not for HG!

I still have side effects today when I feel nauseous I instantly feel anxious and scared and I feel nauseous a lot more than I use to.

I'm having to have teeth removed due to damage from the acid from all the sickness and my damaged kidney is currently only working 30% now causing me lots of pain.

HG is real

HG is not just morning sickness

HG is a daily struggle for woman suffering, for the woman who have suffered and also to the people closest to her family, friends & even work colleagues.

That's why I so desperately want to help! More needs to be done - more research - more awareness - more funding! Please help us