

## **Hyperemesis: what's it all about**

Having been diagnosed with PCOS I was told I would struggle to conceive so we started to try in my mid 20's as we knew we could be in for a long journey. Lots of tests, and medications later we were told that IVF was our only option.

### **However that month we fell pregnant!**

I was sick everyday throughout the pregnancy but somehow I managed to get through it. We were so overwhelmed with the positive test and just hoped the sickness was a good sign. It was tough, I was told so many times to try ginger and sea bands – I tried everything but nothing worked. I had a healthy baby boy by emergency c section in May 2010.

After having my son i was full of joy i couldn't believe I'd made it through the pregnancy, I was so grateful and still am!

We didn't discuss another baby as this was something for the future, we didn't need to consider it and we thought we would have to go through all the tests and medications again. We didn't use contraception as I didn't have periods due to PCOS so was in for shock when I found out I was pregnant 14 months later! I found out by that dreaded feeling of nausea, I just knew it!

**This time it felt different;** I had no energy, I couldn't eat or drink it just wouldn't stay down and I slept for days - I can't believe how much I slept!

I had to move in with my mom as my husband worked away at the time and I just couldn't take care of my son.

I had no energy to shower myself, get dressed or socialise. I didn't want to speak.

I felt so guilty I couldn't even change my son's nappy or take him to play groups, I felt I was letting him down. It all got too much for me, I had gone from being such a loving fun mom to very depressed. I was anxious so much I felt I couldn't be alone at all. My mom had to work so would drop me and my son to another family members home just so I wasn't alone and so they could take care of my son.

I was admitted to hospital a couple of times and was given anti sickness tablets. It was so hard I suffered pre-natal depression - I didn't even know it was a thing!

### **Worst thing I have ever experienced,**

### **Worst place I have ever been mentally and I never ever want to be back in that dark place again!**

I remember the doctor asking me would I take my own life and I answered if I have to live like this forever and not be able to look after my own children then yes.

I didn't want to harm myself and wouldn't have but it was the anxiety and how low I felt, it was so hard.

I cried all the time and I don't even know why - I couldn't explain, I loved kids it's all I ever wanted!

### **I was lucky to be pregnant but I just didn't know how to cope!**

I became so anxious, I kept thinking "how I would cope with my son being 2 and a new born?"

I have a big family and lots of friends there was no reason to be so afraid and feel the way I did but somehow suffering with hyperemesis just got on top of me I couldn't cope!

I was treated by the Barberry centre at the Birmingham women's hospital and again more medication which sent me into more of an anxious state,

**"Was I harming my baby?"**

**"Why couldn't I cope?"**

**"Think of the baby and the effects of the drugs - how selfish of me"**

But I needed them to cope and to live.

My C-section was booked and I gave birth to a beautiful boy of which I ensured I held I immediately I needed to know we was ok!

I fell in love and my pre-natal depression went instantly I can't even explain but I didn't need my pills I didn't need any further help from the Barberry, I was back being me!

After this pregnancy I said I would never ever again go through that frightening experience, I just couldn't cope. I have two healthy boys I'm the luckiest mummy.

### **7 years later and surprise surprise I fell pregnant again! I couldn't believe it but after 6 tests it was confirmed!**

This time I had no sign of sickness I panicked thinking something was wrong, I've suffered hyperemesis and I am very much aware it gets worse with every pregnancy! Doctors said it can happen and enjoy it!

### **Soon enough 6 weeks into the pregnancy it started with a vengeance!**

I couldn't get out of bed,  
I couldn't keep tip tops down or ice cubes!

I was admitted to hospital but this time it was much easier to get treatment. Over the years there seemed to have been changes made and more awareness of the condition.

I was in hospital every 2-3 days because I just couldn't eat or drink.

I couldn't become mentally ill again I'd been so scared from my second pregnancy and I fought so hard to stay mentally stable!

This time my husband no longer worked away so I had his constant support. My mum again was a massive help always here just trying to keep me company and keep me sane.

After around 10 admissions to the hospital and taking cyclizine and ondansetron the doctor discussed steroids, he said I couldn't continue being admitted this often as it wasn't good for me so steroids were a good option and have proven successful. I was not keen to try the steroids until I was over 12 weeks that was just my personal choice.

I lost a stone in weight within a couple of weeks, I looked and felt awful.

My kids really suffered as I was just in bed or in hospital for the 4 months of my pregnancy. I couldn't cook for them, take them to school, run the house, anything I would usually do had to be done by my husband. Once the changes became familiar we did adapt and we made the best of the situation. My husband runs his own business and had to work part time so he could care for the kids as-well as me, but then we had the financial worry. My mom came to every hospital visit and sat with me whilst I had the treatments, she was great. I could see in her face the worry and concern but she put on a brave face and we just made the best of the situation! A beautiful baby was growing and we was all so happy a new baby was coming into our family!

My ribs ached, my throat was so sore, I was so fed up of just throwing up nothing just white foam.

My kids would rub my back and we all worked together to try get me through.

I knew the end result would make all this worth it and I know I'd soon be ok once baby was born.

I also gained the **saliva problem**; every couple of minutes I would have to spit into a bowl. This was so tough how I could let people visit me when I had to keep spitting? I was embarrassed I couldn't finish a sentence without spitting! Chewing helped a little with it if I had to try talk to the doctors but again with the sickness nothing was helping! I called the dentist the doctors and they all said it's just part of hyperemesis there's nothing we can do! So from September to November I was house bound and in bed or at hospital receiving the treatment sometimes I'd have more than one treatment at a time depending on my ketones.

Oh and the constipation! Oh my days so bad. I would literally go once a week if that and was so badly constipated because of the ondansetron, I was in so much pain when trying to go the loo! Sufferers you will know my pain!

On the 18th November I suffered a miscarriage at 17 weeks after 4 months of torture of surviving hyperemesis where my beautiful was baby at the end to make all this worth it. All the signs of pregnancy were strong I was sick, my breasts were so sore and my scans were perfect why did this happen?

I started to bleed a week before like heavy bright red blood I actually thought I was wetting myself it was that fast until I looked down to see the worst.

I was checking my breasts they were sore, I was still spitting, feeling sick and being sick.

We went to the hospital and the scan was fine baby was very active they couldn't see why I was bleeding and said as I don't have periods much it could be the lining of my womb. We were happy with that explanation and went home.

I was always in bed anyway but people suggested maybe I should try come downstairs and move a little as may not be good keep lying in bed. I tried but the smells of just the kitchen or food just couldn't do it, even the doors smelt funny.

On the Tuesday it happened again, I woke up with pain and bleeding but this time I had clots. I went to hospital and again couldn't see why this was happening, it was suggested my c section scar maybe causing problems with the placenta but until I was 20 weeks they won't be able to see. Another doctor said I need to think about how I continue with this pregnancy. We were sent home again and we said we won't give up, the baby is still alive and kicking!

I slept on a thick towel, I was scared to go the toilet as each time I would pass clots big and small. I got used to it and as long as each day passed with little bleeding we were hopeful.

Saturday night came and I had period pain so took my painkillers and settled for the night. 2am came and the pain was unbearable and the bleeding was now coming through my pads and leggings, I couldn't change quickly enough it was just so much.

We rushed to hospital and never ever will I forget the bleeding it was frightening. I stayed on the phone to the ward whilst we were driving in, I was so frightened!

I covered my husband's van seat, my trainers, everything. I just needed to stop the pain I couldn't cope with the pain!

After what felt like forever the doctors gave me morphine, I begged for someone to stop the pain! They peeled my leggings and underwear from me and what I thought may have been the baby was actually a 200ml blood clot. They wanted to lay me down due to the amount of blood I'd lost but the pain was so strong I felt I needed to stand and lean on the bed, but I wasn't allowed!

I was given gas and air along with being topped up with my morphine and at 9.10am I gave birth to our beautiful baby. I couldn't register what was really happening as the doctor told me that I have suffered a miscarriage. I couldn't believe this was happening, I had been through so much with the hyperemesis (not that anyone deserves a miscarriage) but sufferers of HG will understand I hope! I then couldn't pass the placenta it was so hard the pain again continued and now we was in the afternoon. My pulse was low and I had lost so much blood my count went from 115 to 52. I received blood transfusions and they thought I had an infection due to some of the placenta being inside. I had the operation to remove whatever was left inside and I was discharged after 4 days in hospital.

#### **The hardest part was telling my children.**

I really didn't know how to say it but the bereavement team were great and helped us with our words. I felt I had bought this sadness into the family and watched their little hearts break I was so sorry they felt this pain!

The baby was so beautiful and formed for 17 weeks but so small. Although the baby wasn't alive I still felt every inch of love the same feelings as I did when meeting my two boys even though I won't be bringing my baby home. It broke my heart leaving the hospital I felt I was leaving baby all alone.

It's been two weeks and although I am grieving the baby I cannot explain how it is not having the hyperemesis. I can eat, drink, look after the boys and I'm me again. I drove for the first time since September that was weird. I have literally gone off the radar for 4 months.

I still feel sick due to my iron tablets but nowhere near as much as hyperemesis. After giving birth I still was spitting I couldn't believe it and this lasted for 3 days after and having to explain to people why in hospital etc or visitors was so hard because now I didn't have baby to use as explanation.

I'm still on my journey by the support I have received from my family and friends is getting me by for now. I just wanted to list some of the comments and reactions I received that I just didn't find relevant or useful through my hyperemesis and miscarriage journey.

- have you tried ginger it definitely works it does when I have upset tummy
- drink plenty of water just sip it but get it down you
- she won't eat or drink! It's not I won't I can't
- Are you feeling better - like I would just get better after few days
- you must eat and drink otherwise you'll have to go back into hospital
- I suffered morning sickness i just got on with it
- is that what Kate Middleton had
- staying in bed isn't going to help
- spitting won't help with dehydration
- it will fly by 9 months and think of the baby (of course we do but when you feel like death it's not that easy)
- it wasn't meant to be be
- will you try for another
- lots of people suffer miscarriages
- you can't be negative won't get you no where

I would like to thank all the staff on ward 8 at the women's hospital Birmingham who became like family after 4 months of moving in there almost and being on my journey. They genuinely all felt my pain the day I lost the baby, they all gave me support and comfort they really was amazing.