

TERILYN MOTA – PREECLAMPSIA STORY

This is my story of when I had preeclampsia and had to deliver my son early at 32 weeks during an emergency C-section.

It started in February when we were on a family vacation in Disneyland, I noticed when we got back to the hotel my feet were very swollen and I could not put my shoes back on. Figuring since we walked so much that would cause them to swell and it would go away within a few hours of relaxing and putting my feet up. At this time I was about 6 months pregnant and swelling was expected.

When I woke up the next day my feet were even more swollen and I couldn't get them down, we drove home the next day and I called my doctor to make an appointment. When I went into my doctor he did a full check up and checked my weight and blood pressure, everything seemed normal and his instructions were to just cut back on the amount of sodium I was eating.

A few weeks went by and I did as instructed and tried to cut back on the sodium, I was still swollen and swelling more. By this time it was late February and I was swollen from my feet up to my waist and in a matter of two weeks I gained 16 pounds. I knew this was not normal and I was cutting back on anything sweet and filled with sodium. So I made another appointment with my doctor because I was concerned and so was my family because they had never seen someone swell so much and not know how to get the swelling down.

That day I went into my doctor my swelling was somewhat into my hands and face by now and the doctor just blamed it on my weight and what I was eating, he was not concerned at all about the amount of weight I gained in such a small amount of time or the swelling that was getting worse. He didn't even advise me to look out for any signs of diseases you can get when you are pregnant! By this time it was mid March and I was 7 months pregnant and my swelling was very bad. I had swelling in my feet, hands, face, legs, and even my stomach, to me this was not normal and it was getting very painful especially in the hands, they were so swollen it was hard to bend my fingers to the fullest amount.

I knew I had to go back to the doctor because there was something wrong, so I made another appointment. My doctor was out of town at the time and they scheduled me with another doctor in the office who was filling in. It was my first time meeting her and when she came into the room she asked my symptom's and did a quick look at me and could see how swollen I was. That was the first time I heard the word preeclampsia, I knew nothing about it and never knew people could get a disease like this when you were pregnant. She immediately wanted me to go to the lab to do a 24 hour urine test and blood test and told me to watch for certain symptoms such as upper right pain, high blood pressure, headache that wont go away, blurry vision, etc. So I went to the lab and got my blood work done and got the materials for the

24hour urine test. This date was March 20th, and my blood pressure was fine at the doctors, they were just very concerned with my swelling.

Early morning on March 21st is when I woke up in a lot of pain, my swelling was still very bad and now I had noticed some of the symptoms the on call doctor told me to look out for, the pain on my right side and the headache, more like migraine, that wouldn't go away. So I got up to take my blood pressure and at first I thought our machine was broken because it kept giving me three digit numbers on the top and bottom. At this point my headache was so bad I had an ice pack on it to make it stop.

We decided to go into emergency and get checked out because I was having all the signs the doctor told me to look out for, they sent me up to labor and delivery. Once I got there they checked me in and took my blood pressure, at this time my head hurt so much I was not paying much attention to what was going on. I remember them coming in and saying they are going to hook me up to an IV and start me on something called magnesium. After a couple hours on the magnesium I started feeling very strange and the doctor came in and told me since I just turned 32 weeks they do not deliver babies less than 35 weeks at that hospital. That's when the doctor confirmed that I had preeclampsia and I will have to be transferred to a different hospital as soon as possible. The ambulance arrived and I was put in and they told my boyfriend to follow in the car but if something went wrong with me they would have to put the sirens on and drive there as fast as possible. At this time I was freaking out because I had no clue how bad I was, I just knew how bad I felt.

They transferred me to California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. I got to that hospital around eight in the morning and everything started to get worse. I couldn't keep anything down and my swelling was getting worse and so was my blood pressure. They really wanted to watch me closely to see if I can go any longer so the baby could develop a little more. This was not an option as I was slowly getting worse and worse, they gave me the first set of shots to speed up the development of my baby's lungs. Before I could wait for the second set of shots they came in and told me I will need to be rushed into surgery when the doctor arrives to deliver the baby. At this point I was very nervous but I knew if this was the best thing for my baby and I it would be okay.

I remember being on the operating table and being very cold and scared, my son was born at five fifty at night on March 21st. When he was born I was not able to see him or even hear him cry, my boyfriend went over and got some pictures and videos of him before they took him into the NICU. After that I don't remember too much and woke up in recovery, once I woke up they wheeled me into the NICU to see my little baby who was only three pounds. I don't remember much of it but I do remember he was so little and there was something helping him breath and cords everywhere. After I fully was aware I got to see pictures and videos of him from my family members who were there, he was so precious. The next day I was put into a wheel chair and I got to go see him for the second time, still not able to hold him yet but I touched his tiny little hand. My blood pressure was still high, managing it with medication and round the clock blood pressure monitoring.

Two days after my little guy was born was the first time I got to hold him, I was very nervous because he was so small and had so many wires and I didn't want to hurt him in anyway. I spent about a week and a half in the hospital until my blood pressure and swelling was okay enough for me to go home. However, as the drive from home to the hospital was far, the hospital had a very nice program for parents who did not live close to the hospital to be able to stay in a vacant room. This was a very nice way for me to see my baby everyday any time of the day, and pump and give the milk directly to the NICU for usage and storage. My son was in the NICU for two months before coming home and my blood pressure was back to normal. It was a very scary experience and when I found The Promise Walk it was so nice to hear other people's stories and raising money for the foundation to find a cure for preeclampsia.