

My name is Michelle and I am mom to 4 year old twins Liam and Shannon. I tried for 6 years to have another baby (my oldest son is 11 years old). I had to terminate 6 pregnancies as the babies all had Multiple Pterygeum Syndrome. My gynae told me that they would never survive after birth. I fell pregnant in 2004 and was told that I was carrying twins. After trying for so long I was relieved when I was told that they were 'normal' and did not carry the syndrome.

Everything was fine, there were two healthy heart beats until I started bleeding at 10 weeks. The problem was we were in Margate for Easter weekend and the only doctor on call was in Port Shepstone so I waited for hours at Margate Hospital for him to come through. When he arrived he did an ultrasound and much to my relief there were still two strong heartbeats. He however told me to fly back up to Johannesburg as soon as possible.

I was on the next flight home and stayed in bed after speaking to my gynae. About a week later I started bleeding again. It was 2 o'clock in the morning and I was rushed to Sandton Clinic. Upon arrival my gynae was waiting for me and he did a scan. Again, there were two strong heartbeats. He then told me I had a choice, either stay in bed until 37 weeks or book into hospital for the duration of my pregnancy.

I decided to rather stay in bed at home. Everything was fine (and boring) until I was 33 weeks pregnant. My sister was arriving home from the UK and maybe it was the excitement of it all but I suddenly started having contractions. I phoned my Gynae and was told to go immediately to the Labour Ward at Sandton Clinic.

Upon arrival I was examined and my contractions were checked. They were very close together. The doctor gave me medicine to stop the contractions which eventually worked but I had to stay in the Labour Ward. A week later, I started having strong contractions again. This time they could not stop the contractions and my twins were born at 15:45 and 15:46 respectively on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

They were immediately rushed to ICU as they had Respiratory Distress Syndrome and put onto ventilators. They were big at birth, my son weighed 2.8kg's and my daughter 2.1kg's. They were in ICU for 5 weeks and it was the most stressful time of my life. My son aspirated on milk shortly after being taken off the ventilator and as a result had to be put onto an oscillator.

I was only told after he was discharged that they had battled to save him and that I had nearly lost him. The staff at Sandton Clinic Neonatal Unit were absolute stars and I still cannot thank them enough for everything that they did for my twins. They looked after them like their own and I still visit them up until this day.

They have no major medical problems except that my son is a chronic Asthmatic and my daughter had an 80% squint which was repaired by the most wonderful Ophthalmologist in November 2008. He squint is now at 2% and she wears very weak glasses so that she does not strain the eye muscles that were repaired.

I count my blessings everyday for my twins. Unless you have had a premature child/ren it is very difficult to imagine what you go through. Everything I went through was 100% worth it as I now have 2 wonderful (if not naughty) 4 year old as well as my 11 year old son. Everything a mom could ask for!





