

It was the 12th October 2007 the day we found out we were pregnant, man what a feeling! Right from word go I researched pregnancy, babies, what to do, what not to do, what I could and could not eat etc!

To put my obsession into perspective my pregnancy was a gift from God! Four years prior I suffered a blood clot in the brain, the cause was only diagnosed 3 years later being a syndrome called Thrombocytosis i.e. an over production of platelets in my blood. I've been on warfarin daily for 4 years and knowing falling pregnant on the tablet was a complete no no (as it causes severe retardation in the baby), we took the risk none the less and God gave us his gift!

So I call my haematologist set up a consultation for the following week. His opening line was “ don't get excited pray and pray hard in the first 12 weeks you are likely to miscarry, stop the warfarin and we'll see you when you 12 weeks, if all goes well.” My hopes and dreams crushed all at once the thrill excitement of being pregnant killed, burnt to a crisp. Needless to say the next 12 weeks dragged by however, all went well, I was nauseous all day but felt good kept up with my exercise and prayed. 12 weeks came and went visits to the haematologist gynae and foetal specialist all ran according to plan. Each and every visit adding more wood to our fire of excitement hopes and dreams.

Until my 7 month appointment with my gynae – my husband and mom accompanied me to have a sneak preview of my precious. Filled with excitement wondering how big it was, how much it had grown and whether or not we'd get a sneak preview of what it was - even though we wanted a surprise. My gynae however was not in the same mood he was concerned about my lack of stomach growth and reduced amniotic fluid. He recommended I revisit the foetal specialist as soon as possible. As my luck would go, it was the end of April, the week with all the public holidays so the only appointment I could get was 10 days later. Each day of those 10 days passed so slowly, so slowly, each day praying for my baby to hang on believing that all was going to be ok but knowing all was not ok.

Finally the Monday arrived we were up early and at the Prof first thing. Within 5 minutes of my scan Prof informed us that “baby was coming this week” I needed to admit myself into hospital that day and baby had to come out. ((SHOCKER))) Here I was at 32 weeks, my baby with an estimated weight of 1.2kg suddenly needing to pack my bags and prepare for the birth of my baby. The Prof did say that baby was 100% perfect. 32 weeks... 2 months early and estimated weight of 1.2kg i.e. a tub of margarine! Knowing the average birth weight in SA was 3.5 – 4kg my baby was significantly underweight everything was just not alright! I've carried this baby for 7 months of my life and to get told the baby needs to be delivered as I am not keeping him safe and protected, killed me, it absolutely killed me!!!

We left the Prof drove straight home packed the remainder of my bags and set off to the hospital checked in and waited. I was monitored all day on a heart rate monitor. My gynae was away, Murphy's Law, so a locum doc was to see me. He only arrived 9pm that night introduced himself as a specialised gynae focusing his career on special cases like me – “shoo” relief! Said I had to stay overnight to be monitored although for now, all looks ok. He did install a sense of calm in us however he left us with the unanswered question of when, when would we see our baby.

7am Dr walks in, looks at the heart rate monitor winks and says “see you at 5pm” and walks out. Ok in a blur staring at the walls - that’s it I’m having my baby today. That whole day was spent enjoying my tummy for the last time, dreaming of the being inside of me, the joy of being a MOM on the one hand and on the other .feeling the guilt of not being able to help my baby, that my baby could no longer live in side of me, I was not good enough, not strong enough, not a good mother. Sitting in my room my mom and mom-in-law both excited as I was making them “Avó” (Granny) that afternoon.

4:30pm I was rolled into theatre. The caesar did not go well for me, I went in blind not knowing what to expect. The ripping, pulling, tugging sent my heart racing. My husband sat next to me, squeezing my hand supporting me while my baby was being born. In theatre I saw my baby for 2 seconds before he was rushed to NICU. My husband followed my boy while I was stitched up and sent to recovery. Yes my baby boy, I have a boy! His APGAR ratings were really good 7 and 10, 5 minutes later. He was breathing on his own, kicking and screaming ... ah my boy!

I saw him the next morning. The first sight, man what a feeling, you will never understand this feeling until you have a baby of your own, you might think you understand but you truly wont, no one does, unless they have been through it. I’ve attached a pic of what I saw for the first time



10 fingers 10 toes just perfect!

After that, I spent 6 weeks, driving 80km every day to the hospital just to spend time with my baby. I could not drive so I had to beg for lifts some days I would be there from 6:30 to 10 at night just so I could see my baby. During this time I was expressing milk with a pump, my breasts were engorged i.e. they grew so big with

muscle knots and spasms that required daily massages from my husband using his knuckles just to get them out. I got mastitis due to my overflow of milk, and severe knots. All of this was worth it!

After 1 week I finally got to hold and kangaroo my monkey.



Trying to keep afloat while going through a spell of depression and mourning thinking I'm not a good mother that I am a useless human being that I could not even do the basic of basics of what a mother does and that is to protect her baby! (I think all preemie moms feel that sense of loss and theft of normal full term pregnancy.) During this period I was praying that my son would gain weight, he had to put on 800grams. On a daily basis he would put on between 5 and 20 grams so 800 seemed like a mission impossible. But I prayed and hoped and continued expressing hoping my milk could make him grow and redeem me from not protecting him in my womb.

My baby grew and developed really well even developed a little sense of humour!



Watching my baby sleep was one of the many pastimes I would do while spending my day at the hospital. In addition to that, I read 2 Harry Potter books, a nursing textbook on prem babies in NICU and many many internet sites. Just gathering information understanding what my little monkey was going through, what to expect while in hospital, taking him home and for the years to come. The days seem to drag by but looking back they went really fast ... funny that!

My boy was discharged on the 18th June weighing 1.990kg...My favourite day of 2008!



K k I was a little paranoid about the cold ha ha!

My boy settled in well at home continued the 3 hourly feeding and sleeping routine – this helped me as a first time mom! In addition to this he brought happiness, peace and love. A love that was completely unexplained that only a parent would understand!

Jaime is now 9month old weights 6.3kg and is such a joy in our lives.

In the future: - Jaime is scheduled for an op on the 16th February. He has craniosynostosis i.e. premature fusing of the skull sutures. He was born with a irregular shape head but the Paed said it was all due to my lack of amniotic fluid. They cannot tell me whether the skull fused in utero or whether it was in NICU so we cannot determine if it has anything to do with him being a premie. Over the following months the shape did not improve. Other tell tales were showing up for example he would only turn his head to one side as if he had a neck spasm, his left eye would track objects only a certain distance and his skull was forming these slight ridges on the top and sides. During October his physio insisted on doing a CT Scan and thank God she did! After 2 Paeds 1 GP and a physio, he was diagnosed with cranio.

My baby boy is a strong little tyke and is going to fly through this op with flying colours! So within the next couple of weeks we back in hospital, back in ICU and back to pacing the passage ways. Please keep him on your mind and pray for my little boy so that he really does fly through this.

