

HAILEY'S STORY



Hey everyone, my name is Kristin. I am 25 and from Deseronto, Ontario.

Welcome to our journey;

My boyfriend (Derek) and I were both 22 when we began ttc. Due to medical problems I was told if I ever was to conceive on my own, it would be a miracle. Little did I know at the time how much those words would mean to us in our future.

Eleven long months had passed, we were one month away from being given the okay to see a fertility specialist when it happened, our "miracle".

At the time, my boyfriend and I both worked night shifts, I rushed home to take that test, expecting the worst but praying for the best. Immediately, two pink lines! I sat there just staring and rubbing my eyes thinking my head was playing tricks on me from being so tired, but sure enough, 2 more tests later, reality set in and we were over the moon!

I couldn't sleep until I had spoke to my family doctor and they set up my blood work.

The next day, I had my blood work done to confirm, in hours we had the positive results and it finally hit us, "we are actually going to be parents!"

My first prenatal appointment was a week or two after when we discussed prenatal testing. My doctor had mentioned due to our age, anything negative to come out of this blood work was rare and assured us we had nothing to worry about. In fact if we wanted to opt out of it all together, we could have.

We decided to take the "safe route" and go ahead with the testing. After the reassurance, we figured it was harmless anyways. By this time, I was roughly 8 weeks. We planned a family dinner and game night of Cards Against Humanity. We took a couple blank cards and wrote our big news, making sure my mother-in-law got them and was forced to read them aloud to everyone at the table. Just like that our family grew and the joy and excitement was shared! There were laughs and tears that night but the love that filled the room was amazing.

Who would have thought in just a short time our happiness and dreams were about to be turned upside down.

We had just got home from our night shift and just drifted off when my phone rang, being half asleep I missed the initial first call, checking my messages to see who it was when the words rang through my phone saying "Hi Kristin, it's the Doctor's office, we have the results of your prenatal screening and was hoping you guys could come in right away to discuss the results". My heart dropped, instantly I knew something wasn't right. I woke Derek up and told him the message. We both rushed to get dressed and headed to the doctors.

You could hear a pin drop in the office that day when the doctor walked in, I could see the sadness on her face when she sat down and said "the results came back with a 1 in 95 chance of your baby having Down syndrome"

I think the world stopped for a moment as I went numb, the words repeating themselves over and over in my head. "Down syndrome". She told us that she had sent over a referral to Kingston General Hospital's Genetics and they would contact us to discuss further testing and our options. Options? What? I kept asking myself what I did wrong. Googling everything under the sun, asking if this was my fault? (I'll add, Google was honestly my worse enemy throughout this whole process.)

A few days passed, we had talked about not telling our family anything yet... Holding on to that statistic of 1 in 95.. I mean, 1 baby out of 95? Those are good odds right? At least that's what we had told ourselves.

Genetics called, and we sat in a cold room with 2 doctors going over various testing options to better our knowledge of whether our baby indeed had Down syndrome. We were offered another blood test, call FISH, result time would be 4 weeks and an 80% accuracy rate. OR the invasive amniocentesis test, results in 1 week and a 99% accuracy.

And then they told us the "catch" with these tests. If we decided to go with the FISH test, it would put me on a very small window timeline to abort. That word made me instantly feel sick. Abort!?! Making me flash back again to the question of "why is this happening to us". If we decided to go with the amniocentesis test, we had the chance of miscarriage.

They were offering an abortion up until 21 weeks.

They were very comforting, but at the same time, they told us of all the horrible things I read on Google. Not once did they mention anything good. It was all "heart problems, Alzheimer's, miscarriage, preterm birth, breathing problems."

At this point I'm pretty sure I zoned out for the rest of our meeting and agreed to have an answer of if we wished for further testing and which one we wanted to do.

24 hours later, we had decided. We wanted to know for sure what the future had in store for us and agreed to proceed with the amniocentesis.

They got me in for the procedure quite quick, I was around 17 weeks when I had it done, it was extremely painful and honestly, I'd never do it again..

I was told to go home and take it easy for 24 hours, no lifting, and not to be on my feet for long periods of time. Well, my night went for a turn of events after having horrible cramps and blacking out on the floor, to a hospital trip and a ambulance ride back to Kingston General Hospital to check on the baby.

They were fine and not in any distress. Due to the procedure, I had cramps and lack of fluids caused me to faint, but I was terrified and blaming myself for going through with the procedure thinking I was losing my baby.

One week later, life seemed to go back to normal and we hung onto hope that our test results would come back fine.

Until the phone rang, I had that heart-sinking moment all over again.

"This is it... we're finally going to know".

We were at my parents' visiting, so I stepped out to take the call.

Genetics: "Hello Kristin?"

Me: "Speaking"

Genetics: "Is Derek around?"

Me: "No, I'm sorry he's busy. I can pass on the information to him."

Genetics "Okay, I'm so sorry, but we didn't get the results we were hoping for"

I honestly felt like I died a little inside, I couldn't breathe, cry, talk, I just wanted to puke.

I completely broke. I felt like everything we dreamed and hoped for was gone. I didn't know how I could handle this. I mean, it was scary enough being a new mom, but a special needs mom?

We finally told our family and explained everything, this wasn't a secret we could keep any longer.

They we're so loving, so supportive, that slowly, I began to feel whole again.

I had a wonderful OB who didn't judge us for keeping our baby, who also was so supportive throughout the rest of my pregnancy. He was so cautious and made sure everything was perfect. We had a fetal echocardiogram done and also found out that our little one had 3 small holes in her heart, thankfully none of which needed surgery right away.

At 36 weeks my OB told us he wanted to induce me at 39 weeks to be safe. Those last weeks flew by. At 4am the day I was to be induced, I went into labour. My birth was fast and quick, we had so many people on standby in the delivery room. At 2:53 p.m. March 15, 2017, Hailey made her arrival kicking and screaming! (which she still loves to do!)

They quickly checked her over and handed her to me. My heart instantly melted and all the fear and worry just went away. She was here, she was happy, she was perfect.

I constantly tell myself 2 years later, "if only I knew then what I know now."

These past 2 years have been the best of my life, I wake up to a happy smiling toddler who loves to give the BIGGEST hugs and the best kisses! And I wouldn't have my life any other way!

She has taught me so much in such a small amount of time, showing me everyone is perfect, celebrate the little things, and if you're ever having a bad day... A hug always helps!

"Down syndrome was an unplanned journey, but we love our tour guide!"

Story submitted by beautiful mom, Kristin Christie