

The first time I had hyperemesis was when I was pregnant with my first little boy in 2010. Only I didn't know that's what it was at first.

We got married in June and I was pregnant in July. Obviously we were over the moon but all my excitement and planning disappeared when I became ill and there seemed to be no end in sight. I was almost 6 weeks when I started vomiting and at first put it down to morning sickness. I wasn't able to keep anything down, not even water. I tried everything from ginger to travel sickness bands to preggy pops. Nothing worked.

By 8 weeks I had moved home so my Mam could look after me while my husband worked. I was to stay there for 10 weeks. I was also 8 weeks the first time I went to hospital. Actually I was 8+3 and was so upset when the doctor performing the scan said I was only 8+1 – two extra days of vomiting and nausea was how I saw it. I also learned about Ketones for the first time; basically the higher the number in your urine the more your body is actually starving itself.

I was admitted and put on a drip on the gynae ward. I'll never forget lying there that first night thinking of all the food I'd love to eat and swore I'd never stop myself from having anything I wanted if I ever felt normal again. I was told I had Hyperemesis Gravidarum and given Stemetil leaving the hospital.

I Googled everything there was to know which wasn't much. The Stemetil didn't do anything. My GP and consultant were fantastic and prescribed me Cariban which was then a relatively new drug; so new that the pharmacy had to order it in for me. It helped in that I wasn't vomiting as often every day but I still felt wretched.

I lost a stone and a half, had no energy or interest in anything and at one point I wanted to die; I really felt like I couldn't keep going. Even my own saliva was causing me to vomit. I would lie in bed with a tissue against my mouth so I wouldn't have to swallow it. I was starving and some days I'd try to force myself to eat something. I'd carefully think about what I could have that wouldn't be awful coming back up. Imagine having to think like that? I'd also count the time after having something to eat; the longer it stayed down the greater the chance of it being digested and less coming back up.

The days absolutely dragged, interspersed with going on a drip which I hated. I preferred my own bed and only at my lowest would I agree to go into the hospital. It carried on like this until 14 weeks when I gradually stopped being sick as often. By 20 weeks I was able to return to work. I was lucky; some women suffer until the birth of their baby.

Throughout it all I had fantastic support, especially from my Mam, my husband and close friends. Without them I think the feelings of helplessness and isolation from society would have overwhelmed me. I had hyperemesis on my second pregnancy but that time I could keep down water. I have recently had my third boy but no hyperemesis!

Hyperemesis affects you both physically and mentally; for some to dismiss it at "just morning sickness" shows the lack of understanding out there. Hyperemesis Ireland is invaluable for those suffering; I wish it had been around for me.