

At the ripe old age of 30, I underwent surgery for suspected endometriosis. At the time, my greatest fear was that the surgeon would discover nothing at all and I'd be left with the status of a hypochondriac. As it turned out, the endometriosis that was discovered and treated was in fact quite severe and had clearly been there for many years.

When I awoke from my surgery, I didn't know whether I was relieved or devastated to hear the news. The relief came because after so many years of bowel pain, tummy aches and heavy periods - there was actually a reason behind the symptoms. The devastation was attributed to what I thought I knew about endometriosis - that it spelt bad news for fertility.

My surgery was extensive and without going in to all the details, most of my pelvic organs were affected by endometriosis with some cysts around two and a half centimetres deep. My recovery took at least a month but within weeks, I knew something had changed.

I wasn't using the loo so frequently, my tummy pains were gone and then my period came and went without a drama. I couldn't honestly believe it. We drove to the beach one day and we didn't have to stop once to use the toilet en-route! My partner was amazed.

The number one question I asked myself for months following my surgery was why hadn't I done it sooner?

Of course the reasons were obvious - fear and denial. I was so scared of having an operation and terrified that I would go in for surgery and they would find nothing.

If there is something I know now, it's this: "If you feel instinctively that something isn't right with your body - believe it"

However, before my partner and I had too many opportunities to dwell on things, we were delighted to discover we were expecting a baby! To us, this was a miracle.

My surgeon had told us that our chances of conceiving after surgery were OK, but not great, so we weren't expecting it to happen overnight. We were also in the midst of planning our wedding - so the news we were expecting had us both shocked and elated.

Some time has passed and we were married, then I gave birth to a healthy baby girl, weighing 9lbs and 5oz in October. Her name is Grace, and it's obvious we are tremendously thankful to have her in our lives.

I write this story because I want it to be told. A prognosis of endometriosis does not necessarily mean that your fertility will be affected. However, for a long time I believed it would and for that alone, I gained an insight into the truly devastating effects of this disease, beyond the symptoms.

If I had left it for much longer to have the surgery, we might never have conceived.

Grace has bought hope to our family and I hope this story might bring hope to you.

For more information:

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