

The Birth of my Daughter

Mary

On the 3rd of December 1981, my daughter was born. It was my second child. She was 3 months premature and she weighed 3 lb 2.

My whole life changed with this new baby. She was so tiny and floppy. I also got diabetes through the pregnancy and the doctors said it would go away after I had the baby. But it never went away, it just decided to stay with me. But because of the diabetes, Elaine was the way she was. She couldn't breathe when she was born. She was on a ventilator, breathing through a tube. All the family was worried about her.

After a couple of months, she got home and hugged my knee, and that was the first year I'd ever had a bottle of milk instead of a bottle of vodka or something like that at the New Year's. We'd feed her at 12 o'clock, because she had to be fed every 2 hours.

I felt so much fear during that time. Elaine got whooping cough in her first year of life and it was a horrible thing to watch because she couldn't breathe. It took me a while to cope and know how to manage the situation. Everything had to be timed. Also, because they're so tiny, nothing fitted as everything was too big. My sister knitted premature clothes for her. She came into the hospital with the wee pink woolly cardigan. Oh, I still got them in the house. You keep things like that.

Her face was the size of your hand. She had the tiniest, tiniest wee face, but beautiful. Premature babies also just get a wee bit hairy. So fine, fine down hair on the back. Really faint, but that's because they're premature and they're not fully developed right, but all goes away as the week's going.

After giving birth, I got postnatal depression. It was a hard time. But every time I would look at my daughter, it made me want to help her. I knew I had to help this wee thing. I never thought about anything else. My husband, Gordon, was brilliant as well. He basically reared her in her first year and he took a lot of care of Allan, the older brother. He was a dedicated father.

I felt sorry for Alan, as if he would get neglected a wee bit. He didn't, but I felt like that because I couldn't give the same attention to him as I could to Elaine. But my mum at the time helped us out. She said "He's a brave soldier". She was great and she took him quite a lot, for wee dates out and things like that. He was only 3 and a half, so he was still a baby himself. Alan never really said much because he was getting a lot of help, spoiled over my mum and her side of the family. He was all right, just enjoying all the extra treats.

Looking back, I feel proud of my daughter. Thankfully, she's fine. She's in her 40s and she's a paramedic. You would never know that she had any bother.

She's just a wee bundle of beauty.