Miracle Baby Celebrates First Christmas

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The parents of a ‘miracle’ baby will celebrate their first Christmas together after being told this day might never come.

Jade Peachey and Peter Whittlesey both 32 from March, Cambridgeshire, thought they would never have their much-desired baby. Seven years ago, Jade was diagnosed with cervical cancer and, despite having a pioneering fertility preservation treatment, she was told it would be unlikely she would have a child.

The couple decided their last hope was IVF, but remarkably just before their appointment they found out they were expecting a new addition to the family. **Sick Children’s Trust Ambassador, Jade says:**

“When I was 25, I went for my first smear test and found out I had cervical cancer. When you are told news like that, it’s hard to know what to think. Over the following months, I had numerous cancer treatments, but nothing worked. I was losing hope so my consultant and I had a frank conversation about my options. I decided to go for a pioneering fertility preservation treatment called Radical Vaginal Trachelectomy but even so, the team made it very clear that it would be incredibly hard for me to become pregnant.

“For the first couple of years after my operation and recovery I remained positive. But as I approached 30 I noticed that I started to become very negative, losing hope that I would ever become pregnant. I wouldn’t be defeated though. I’ve never wanted something so much in my life, I can’t describe the feeling, and I just yearned for a baby. Peter and I tried for years before eventually deciding to find out about IVF, so we booked an appointment, but then found out we were pregnant.”

The couple were overjoyed, but then at 27 weeks pregnant Jade’s waters broke and within hours of arriving at The Rosie Hospital, Cambridge, she became seriously ill with a high temperature and suspected sepsis. As a result, baby Effie was delivered by emergency caesarean but had severe complications. **Sick Children’s Trust Ambassador Peter says:**

“Everything happened really quickly. Effie had to be resuscitated four times and was rushed to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). We were told that Effie would need to be kept at The Rosie Hospital until her due date because she was so poorly – but this was 13 weeks away.

“I started to worry about what would we do and how I would be able to support my family. I had my baby daughter in NICU, my partner on the ward and I really didn’t want to leave either of them. I looked at nearby hotels but they were extortionate. I felt hopeless and was so worried that I wouldn’t be able to be with them.”

However, soon after Effie was born, Peter was told about The Sick Children’s Trust, a charity which runs free ‘Home from Home’ accommodation across the country supporting families with seriously ill children in hospital. The Sick Children’s Trust gave Peter and Jade a room in its Chestnut House, just minutes from Effie’s neonatal cot. Peter continues:

“I just burst with relief. Chestnut House was located inside the hospital – literally minutes from where Effie was. Jade and I stayed at Chestnut House while Effie recovered which meant I didn’t have to leave my family at all; we could all be together and fight this battle as one.”

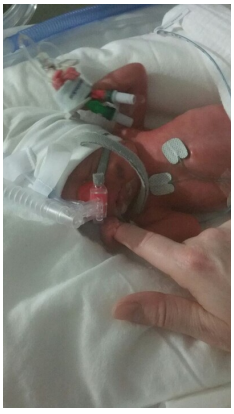
Amazingly, after four weeks Effie was discharged from the specialist centre to be treated at her local hospital, Hinchingbrooke. Now she is back home and is coming on leaps and bounds. Jade adds:

“We didn’t know if we would ever get pregnant, and now this year will be our first Christmas with our miracle baby. She’s not just a miracle because of we never thought we’d never have her, it’s also because she survived the odds set against her.”

“Thanks to my amazing care team I got my baby and was able to start my family. Please don’t ever give up, I hope by sharing my story it will give you some hope.”

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