

Itching fit uncovered pregnancy condition



Kerry with her husband James and their daughter Chloe. Picture: Andy Thompson Photography.

HEALTH: Mum raising awareness of condition that affects 5,500 pregnant women in the UK each year

GRAEME STRACHAN

An Angus mum has told how she discovered her unborn baby was at risk after she developing an itchy rash.

Kerry Anderson, from Montrose, had to give birth to daughter Chloe at just 38 weeks after being diagnosed with intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (ICP).

ICP, which is also known as obstetric cholestasis (OC), is the most common liver condition of pregnancy and affects around 5,500 women in the UK each year.

The main presenting symptom of the condition is itching, which could be mild to so severe the woman scratches herself until she bleeds.

The condition carries concern for the unborn baby as researchers have shown that the risk of stillbirth is three times higher for women suffering from severe ICP than those with an uncomplicated pregnancy.

Kerry's daughter Chloe was born in August 2013 after she was induced at Ninewells Hospital and she's now raising awareness of the pregnancy-specific liver condition.

The 33-year-old, who works as a team leader for Sky in Aberdeen, is now



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KERRY ANDERSON

expecting a baby again, but luckily ICP has so far not been diagnosed in her latest pregnancy.

"We are all aware of the more common conditions like pre-eclampsia and gestational diabetes, but there is a real lack of awareness of ICP," she said.

"I was 33 weeks pregnant when I began itching, but it was the middle of July and it was quite hot and itching is normal because your skin is stretching.

"I went to an antenatal class and I was really itching my bump, my legs, my hands, my feet - the lot.

"The midwife referred me to Ninewells and I was diagnosed with ICP.

"It was quite daunting because I wasn't aware of the condition.

"It was worrying because you don't want a premature baby, but they were talking about inducing me at 35 weeks - but luckily I made it a bit longer and the care I got was fantastic.

"Chloe was born at 38 weeks, which they won't let you go past because the dangers can be stillbirth."

Chloe was born healthy, but Kerry said she would not like to imagine what might have happened if the condition had not been picked up when it was.

Kerry is at a higher risk of getting ICP again, but after a long discussion with her husband they decided to try for another baby knowing what to expect this time around.

Now six months pregnant, Kerry and eight of her Sky colleagues recently walked eight miles from the Falkirk Wheel to the Kelpies for ICP Support.

For more information visit www.icp-support.org

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