

Mercy's NICU

Charity Tyler, 35, was enjoying her “perfect” pregnancy—no nausea, discomfort or fatigue.

On April 28, about six weeks before her due date, she and husband Chris packed their hospital bag, tucking it away until it was needed. The next morning, Charity went to her regularly-scheduled doctor's

check-up—and from that point on, the “perfect” pregnancy began to turn into a nightmare of concern for Charity's life.

Lately, she had been feeling very tired and noticed a little swelling in her feet. At her appointment, Charity dutifully reported her symptoms to Scott Bemus, DO, OB/GYN Associates. Dr. Bemus, noting that her blood

pressure was elevated and there was protein in her urine, ordered a 24-hour urine collection and a full blood work-up and sent her home to rest.

The next day, April 30, Dr. Bemus called to advise her to have Chris meet her at Mercy Medical Center right away. He told her she had preeclampsia and they needed to have the baby soon. “Get there as soon as you can. They are expecting you,” he said. He didn't tell her then, but he suspected she had HELLP (Hemolysis, Elevated Liver enzyme levels and Low Platelet count) syndrome. Charity was worried about the baby, but Dr. Bemus was more worried about her.

“The cause of HELLP syndrome hasn't been identified, so we can't pinpoint the patients who are at risk. Charity was at an increased risk for seizures



Callista Lenette Tyler, 4 lbs., 14 oz., was born to Charity and Chris Tyler in Mercy's NICU. Charity had HELLP syndrome, putting her at an increased risk for seizures and stroke. Delivering the baby early was the only treatment.



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HANDLE WITH CARE**

and stroke. There is no treatment other than to deliver the baby—most women improve after giving birth,” says Dr. Bemus.

Charity remembers, “I went straight to Mercy and said ‘Hi, I'm Charity.’ They said ‘Come on in, we're expecting you.’” The rest is a blur as she was quickly taken to a private birthing suite and labor was induced with Pitocin. At one point, the Pitocin had to be stopped when the baby's heartbeat became irregular. But, once a “happy heartbeat” was re-established, they were clear to start the Pitocin again.

Meanwhile, Charity was experiencing severe exhaustion, nausea, skyrocketing blood pressure, profuse sweating and disorientation due to the magnesium sulfate administered to lessen the chances of stroke and seizure. “I had no sense of time. My speech was slurred and I lost muscle control,” says Charity.

At 9 a.m. on May 1, she finally was dilated to 9 centimeters and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) team arrived with a specially-equipped incubator for premature babies. Soon, Callista Lenette Tyler was born and weighed in at 4 lbs., 14 oz. After delivery, Charity says, “they put her on my chest right away and then she was gone. I remember Dr. Allen (Roger Allen, MD, is Mercy's NICU Medical Director) telling us she was healthy.”

Charity, however, was not and needed special care. The baby was out, but it would be a while before Charity's symptoms dissipated. If not caught early, HELLP can have serious lasting effects, such as liver damage. Once Charity was able to walk down the hall, she was released from Labor and Delivery and stayed in the NICU.

Callista stayed in the NICU 11 days to receive feeding and special care while Charity recovered. Charity and Chris were able to stay with their baby in a private NICU suite. Charity remembers with a smile, “My dad called to see how we were doing and he asked if I got to see the baby very often. I said ‘Dad, we stay right in the room with her on a pull-out bed.’ He was surprised and thought it was great that we were able to bond right away with her. Mercy really took care of our whole family—this place is amazing.”

Dr. Allen continued to reassure the Tylers that their baby was very healthy and answered questions as they came along. As for Charity, she is feeling great and happy to have her baby at home.

“Because there are so many considerations when caring for a premie, we've really learned to celebrate the little things like an ounce gained or a good feeding,” she says. “Chris and I have always been a good team, but it's fun watching each other in the parenting role. We know that we wouldn't have been this prepared without the Mercy staff's help. We feel so fortunate that Calli is healthy, and we are so thankful that she's home.”