

I remember that day like it was yesterday. August 25, 2009 was the day we had been looking forward to for 8 long months. It had been scheduled, it had been anticipated, it had been prepared for. We were ready, we thought. From the day that the ultrasound showed that we would be doubly blessed there had been quite a bit of anxiousness on the whole family as to how we would care for two new babies. How would our other children adjust from going from a family of 4 to a family of 6 overnight? How would I care for these babies with little to no help during the week, as my husband works away from home a lot? So many questions, but we just knew we would roll with the punches and do what had to be done to adjust to the new lifestyle and the addition of these two precious baby girls.

I had a scheduled c-section as I had with my other two children as well. I remember the delivery room and all of the chaos of extra doctors and extra nurses to take care of not one, but two. I remember seeing 2 nursery cribs in my room when I checked in. Reality was really starting to hit, but one thing that sticks out in my mind was the first time that I heard them both cry at the same time. Two individual cries coming from 2 individual babies. WOW, it hit home! I saw them just briefly in the OR before they were taken over to their little tables to be cleaned and evaluated. They both passed their initial evals with flying colors. They were cute, they were healthy, they were perfect! I was told that they would be transferred to the special nursery just to be thoroughly evaluated and to make sure they were getting enough O2. They told me it would only be a brief moment and they would be brought to the room shortly. I was relieved. Just to get through the delivery which is really scary with a c-section, was a huge weight off. They finished me up and transferred me to my room. I was VERY groggy from all of the drugs so I slipped in and out of consciousness often.

The next hour changed our lives forever. Very long story short, the doctors came in and informed us that they suspected that Carley and Casey had Down Syndrome. Life as I knew it, withered up and caved in on me in that moment. I couldn't even stay cognitive. The drugs were taking their toll and my mind was trying to cope with the news. It was all a fog. The memories of telling the family members one by one and my husband and I just trying to wrap our head around it all. It was the scariest day of my life.

Everyone was so supportive. The nurses were wonderful, the doctors, our visitors, the flowers that just kept arriving, all of it was wonderful, but I just wanted to see my babies. They were in the special care nursery under the O2 tents just for precaution. Then they brought them, first my little Casey, then the next day my Carley. We were a family. The 6 of us rallied together and my other two children were amazing with the babies. The girls and I left the hospital on day 3 healthy and ready to see what was next.

The girls are three years old now. It's really hard for me to believe. I will be honest. Life has been a real challenge. Life with twins IS challenging! Life with twins who have Down Syndrome is FULL. Full of wonder, full of love, full of the unknown.

If I could offer any advice to new parents of children with Down Syndrome it would be 1.) Do your very best not to compare your angel with other babies. Your baby can't be compared. Your baby has as much if not more potential than any other child, and to limit them by comparing them is a disservice to you and to them, and 2.) Be patient! You really have no choice in this matter. Patience will come, because things just take longer. Milestones take longer. 3.) Enjoy your baby! We are always complaining that they grow up too fast. Well, here is your chance to savor that sweet little one! ENJOY your life. It is a good life. You have been truly blessed and everyone whose life is touched by that precious baby will be blessed as well!

Congratulations and Blessings on your family!

Cara Coleman

