

SAMARA'S TB STORY: A TRULY TOUGH MOTHER



It is difficult telling your child you have TB. You know they're likely to be worried about you, and you will also have to explain that they need to be screened to make sure they don't have TB too.

Luckily for me, telling my daughter Nevaeh wasn't as bad as I thought. My husband, Marc, and my daughter were brilliant throughout it all. When we first found out I had TB, we weren't sure whether or not to talk to Nevaeh about it, we knew the first thing she was going to do was Google "TB." It was about making sure she had the right information.

An unpleasant Christmas present

I was diagnosed on Christmas Eve. My GP gave me the news over the phone. He said it looked very much like TB and that I was booked to see a consultant on New Year's Eve, and... Merry Christmas! I spent the next seven days not knowing what it all meant.

Doctors initially thought my symptoms were asthma and gave me inhalers. After numerous tests, I was diagnosed with pulmonary TB. When I found out, I told my daughter it was a lung infection. She asked if it had a name, and I said, "It's a really long one. The easiest thing to call it is TB. I need to tell you quite a few things about it, and I'd rather you listen to me than go away and look at stuff yourself because the internet doesn't always have the correct facts." Of course, she was Googling! I knew she had been Googling "lung cancer" and all sorts of things, too. So, I think telling her I had TB was the lesser of two evils



The treatment was quite aggressive, and it made me really sick. The Isoniazid (a TB antibiotic), made me feel worse than my TB symptoms. I ended up being off work for about 10 weeks because I lost a lot of weight, couldn't eat, and had a terrible rash.

The TB team was brilliant. Everything that happened, they managed to combat with something else. They realised I was resistant to one of the antibiotics. So, the second round of treatment added another nine months. All in all, my treatment was a 12-month process.

TB won't beat me!

I've always been very healthy, often running and exercising. That's why I took on a fundraising challenge for TB Alert even during my treatment. "GMTV" was asking for "tough mums" to apply for this Tough Mudder event. They wanted people with a bit of a story. Feeling a bit sorry for myself and thinking, "I could have done that six months ago," I thought, "Well, why can't I do it now?" I wanted the opportunity to show my family that I can be strong again, that I can beat this, and that TB is not going to debilitate me.