

My name is Takayla Lightfield, and I'm originally from South Dakota, enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. And I am Miniconjou Lakota.

I have two daughters. The oldest is six years old and the youngest is 15 months old.

My second pregnancy ended up being horrible from week five until she was born. I was having some abdominal pain and I initially didn't think that it was related to the pregnancy.

Closer to my third trimester, I had to go in weekly and then ended up being twice a week in the last few weeks before she was born, because I started swelling again just like my first pregnancy, and then my blood pressure started increasing. And so then they diagnosed with preeclampsia.

I actually lost weight throughout my entire pregnancy because I was sick and vomiting every day, all day. From like while I was sick. Five weeks, but then until she was born.

So I was swollen, I was tired. I had headaches, nonstop, like around the clock.

One Friday I went in and my blood pressure was just, like, really high. The next morning is when I had to start taking my own blood pressure readings and it was high. So I had to call the nurse line and they said, okay, you need to go in.

I was like 32 weeks and five days, I think, and they were on deferment for anyone that was like earlier than like 36 weeks. And so I went to the hospital that I didn't want to go to.

Every 15 minutes they were doing my checking my blood pressure and it just continued to go up and up and up. They did some lab work when I had just gotten there. A doctor came in and said, your, your it was my liver enzyme levels were too high.

They were trying to get me to 34 weeks just because they said that the outcomes for a baby after 34 weeks are so much better. The next morning the doctor came in and she said, Your liver enzymes are increasing. It's no longer safe for you to be pregnant. So baby needs to come today, like this morning. And, even though I kind of knew what was happening, it was still a shock.

I didn't know that I was diagnosed with Hellp Syndrome. It wasn't until after Charlie was born and they were like, done with the surgery that the surgeon said something about Hellp syndrome. And I was like, Is that what I have? Hellp syndrome is, it means that my liver was failing, you know, if they had waited any longer or if I hadn't gone to the hospital or been like an active participant in my pregnancy, I could have died.

You have to advocate for yourself in the medical systems. You see so many people when you're going to like different checkups and different like the hospital and then all this stuff that if I hadn't asked for certain things or ask certain questions like that, referral might not have gotten put in and I might not have had that support.

And I think it's important to share certain stories like certain, like warning signs and symptoms and then also know the warning signs and seek care immediately if you're experiencing them.