

My name is Vanessa Sanchez, and I'm a member of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes, and I live in Polson, Montana.

Family is the most important thing in my life.

When you are pregnant, you are considered one of the most sacred people of your tribe. Just honor those women because they are the keepers of life.

I do have a very close relationship with my doctor, which is very, I believe, very rare on a lot of reservations. There's usually one, said one doctor, that you usually go to that the tribe approves. I really needed somebody that would listen to my concerns as well as take my thoughts into consideration, which my doctor did. And it took me a long time to find her and to find somebody that I actually trusted.

My pregnancy complications, for the most part, started at the end of my pregnancy. For the past, for the last four months, I would say a lot of my symptoms were coming on at night and I knew something was wrong. I knew something was going on. I had this horrible headache that was not going away. Even with Tylenol, even with cold compress, even with all these different, like, home remedies to try to get me this headache away, it was not going away. The blurred vision is what changed her mind though.

And so she asked me to have my mom check my blood pressure. So my mom did my mom checked my blood pressure multiple times. I had high blood pressure or preeclampsia.

When I was diagnosed with preeclampsia, we I wasn't put in any immediate danger, but I was put on bed rest. My mom and my sister really came forward and helped me do the day to day tasks that I could not do on my own.

I was really lucky to have a doctor that was very accommodating, very open and could listen to me about anything. But I know many women are not that lucky. Many women do not have someone that they can turn to or someone that will listen to all of their problems or concerns.

Having my baby is just like the best thing that could have ever happened to me.

I would tell women if they are experiencing any symptoms, to trust their gut feeling. To be their own advocate. They know their bodies. They know what they are experiencing. And I would seek medical attention. Or I would seek someone who will listen to your problems.

My biggest supporter was my doctor, and I am just so grateful for her.

You need to trust your own instincts. And if you do not feel comfortable with somebody, find somebody else. If she is saying something is wrong, really listen to her. Really support her.