

[Onscreen] DHHS and CDC logo.

I was so married to my birth plan. You know, I imagined what it would be like, and I studied and I read and I went to classes, and I felt really prepared to have this natural birth. But what I did not prepare for was a scenario where everything goes south.

Hi, I'm Allyson Felix. I'm an Olympic athlete and a mom, and this is my story.

[Music]

Being my first pregnancy, I was feeling really great. You know, I trained throughout my pregnancy. I was running every day. I was in the pool. I was lifting weights. I felt really strong.

That was my scheduled routine appointment. I was sitting back in one of the rooms waiting for the doctor to come in to see me, and when she did, she mentioned that she wanted to hook me up to be monitored, and I started to think, hmm, I wonder if this is normal, and I wonder what's going on. And finally, she came back, and she said that she had some concerns, and she wanted to send me to the hospital for further testing. That's when my heart kind of sank, and I was like, wow, this must be something, you know?

I kind of heard of the statistics of, you know, black women be more at risk for complications, but being a professional athlete, it just -- I never imagined myself in the situation.

At 32 weeks, I was diagnosed with severe preeclampsia. My husband was coming from work, and he met me there, and we were sitting together, and the doctor came in, and she just said that things were still concerning at that they wanted to admit me to the hospital. That's really the point where things got scary. Doctors and nurses were coming in and they were concerned, and I remember at one point the doctor rushing in and saying that, "You know, we cannot wait any longer. We are going to have to rush you in for an emergency C-section." You know, I am scared. I'm terrified, but I'm not really concerned about myself. I'm just worried about this little, tiny baby who, you know, is not ready to enter this world yet. All I was thinking is just I want a healthy baby. I didn't imagine, you know, not even being able to be in the same room as my daughter and not being able to hold her until even the next day.

Camryn was in the NICU for a month after she was born. I stayed in the hospital for a while, and I had some complications that come along with preeclampsia. It was just a really scary, tough situation. But I feel so blessed that I came out on the other side of it. There are so many women who do not walk out of the hospital. They are not there to raise their children.

I really want women just to be aware. You know, to know if they're at risk. To, have a plan in place to not be intimidated in doctors' offices, and to be heard. You know, to be persistent about anything that does not feel normal, because I know how important it is. I know how scared I was, and I know how I didn't feel prepared or educated, and I don't want anyone else to feel that way.

[Music]

Hear Her.

[Onscreen] Learn more at [cdc.gov/HearHer](https://www.cdc.gov/HearHer).