



## HER FOUNDATION

HYPEREMESIS EDUCATION & RESEARCH

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[www.HelpHER.org](http://www.HelpHER.org)  
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### Jeremy King

HER Foundation Co-founder

Husband of HG Survivor and father, son (2003)

### His Story – a husband’s perspective of HG

I’m the kind of guy who always dreamed of having a family – a large family. Usually the first one on the floor to play with a group of kids, I couldn’t wait to be a father myself. When my wife and I found out she was pregnant, you could not peel the smile from my face – at least not until the 5<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy when Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) hit my wife like a bomb.

The dreaded nausea of HG lasted round the clock, interrupted hourly only by the kind of vomiting one gets with severe food poisoning. She couldn’t eat, drink or barely make it to the bathroom. I reacted the way most men would - I pushed her and told her to tough it out, surely it would all go away soon. I tried everything I could think of, read about or that a family member suggested in a desperate attempt to sooth her. This included sea bands, herbal lollipops and countless brands of crackers. Nothing worked. She only worsened; the pounds flew off while she was supposed to be eating for two. It took me several weeks (and several hospitals stays) to finally get it. First, HG was NOT typical morning sickness, my wife was suffering from an actual disease. Second, it had nothing to do with her willpower or mental toughness. The fact was this disease caused her body to reject all food and liquid – despite her knowing she was literally starving – and starving the tiny baby growing inside her. Third, since most doctors and nurses don’t fully understand HG or how to effectively treat it, I knew she needed the full support of her family and friends to make it through. She felt helpless, scared and alone.

After months of this agony and in-patient hospital stays, things only got worse. The doctors argued over the proper course of action, and who to treat – her or the baby. Her emaciated body had deteriorated to the point that we faced the last resort option, a surgically implanted feeding tube (Total Parental Nutrition—TPN). I was close to losing my job, which compounded my stress and worry over whether my wife or child would even survive this horrible ordeal. At a cost of \$1,000 a day just for her bag of food, questions arose as to whether our insurance would even cover the mounting medical bills. We wanted HG to go away – we needed help.

What helped us the most was finding [hyperemesis.org](http://hyperemesis.org) on the Internet, where we found answers and support from fellow HG sufferers and survivors who could relate to our ordeal. What these women go through is hard for anyone to comprehend, even those closest to them (i.e. husbands, friends and family). I realized that only HG survivors can truly understand the horrors of this traumatic disease. Hearing from others that she was not alone in her struggle, helped get my wife through another day. While our families were openly supportive, there were those who privately questioned my wife’s condition – saying things like, “she should deal with it, we all had morning sickness.” That belief infuriated me the most. If these women were imprisoned in a cell and deprived of food and water, then they might begin to understand the level of suffering, frustration and despair HG women face.

HG impacts your life forever, and makes you question future family plans. Without a cure, little research and few doctors who understand, risking my wife’s life again or the life of our baby was just too risky. We will never forget what this disease does to you physically, emotionally and psychologically. My wife will always have the 3 scars on each side of her chest from her feeding tube (TPN), but these scars don’t compare to the scars left on both our hearts forever.

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Jeremy King handles fundraising and public policy/advocacy efforts for the HER Foundation.