Tamara Rey - Before Birth

Episode 202 · November 19, 2020 · with Tamara Rey

IN THIS EPISODE

Tamara Rey joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC, while pregnant with her second baby and nearly due. An actor and writer finishing a feature psychological thriller, Tamara looks back on a first pregnancy that hit her like a truck, and on a birth plan that swung from a cesarean and a margarita to a home birth with an OB, a midwife and a doula — before sudden and scary complications during her first birth changed everything for her daughter Penny. Now she and her husband Jared are planning for their second birth: a hospital plan this time, extra anatomy scans after her placenta presented in multiple lobes again, and a gestational diabetes diagnosis she is managing with diet and exercise — and, as she tells it, a hard-won peace with however this baby chooses to come.

About this transcript: *This transcript was created with AI-assisted transcription and reviewed by our team. It may not be 100% accurate — names, medical terms, and phrasing can occasionally be mis-transcribed. For exact wording, please listen to the episode audio.*

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the informed pregnancy and parenting podcast. I'm your host. Dr. Elliott Berlin today We're talking to a mother who experienced a birth much different and scarier than the birth she had planned for my guest is an actor and writer who's currently finishing a feature a psychological thriller and Planning for the arrival of her second child any week now. She's also an amazing human being Tamara Ray Welcome to the podcast Hello. Thank you for having me. Oh my goodness. I have a million things to talk to you about. I'm jumping right in Where are you from?

TAMARA REY: Born in Miami. I'm Cuban so that makes sense, but my family moved to Texas after Hurricane Andrew And I just kept going west after going to film school at UT Austin

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's why you went to Texas for film school. Yeah, I did and I

TAMARA REY: Love UT and I love everything about Austin and I miss it, but I love it here. Ah

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So what inspired you to go to film school? When did you know that was your thing?

TAMARA REY: I was into movies super young and was watching probably way more things than I should have been an earlier age and Just kind of fell in love with the magic of film and I didn't know that you could even study that I didn't know that was a thing Let alone a job you could get

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wondered that about stand-up comedians like who goes to like stand-up comedy school like well Who's a little kid who says you know when I go up I want to be a stand-up comedian How does that happen? I mean they're wizards. I don't know. That's a whole nother level of wizardry I ended up oddly doing stand-up comedy But I know go to school for it and I'm always mesmerized by people who are amazing at it And I'm just like where's like even a magician to like who I want to go to magic school Anyway, it sounds like that's what you thought about film making like where can I go do that for sure for sure?

TAMARA REY: I mean it was like Hogwarts with like difficult tests and lots of screenwriting and like a lot of experience with production which was where I was like Oh, I'm love projects and I've just being with people and getting to collaborate was what kind of sealed the deal And I was lucky that at my school did a program that sent a semester abroad In Los Angeles Yeah, exactly so abroad, but you get to Intern and do college credit and I was lucky that after interning with Happy Madison. I got hired right afterwards Almost ten years later

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, hold on second when you went to film school because there's so many aspects of the entertainment industry

TAMARA REY: Did you have an idea where you want to land? It's like yes, and no I was kind of just like I'll do anything I was kind of that person and then Really when you're in film school, you kind of pick your own track and I gravitated towards screenwriting and then I was Kind of a control freak and all my production classes I was drawn to directing and editing and every little facet because they all affect each other But I would say writing is the thing that has always come back time and time again Even when I don't try to pursue it it pursues me

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So you like to write but you don't want somebody to take your baby and make changes to it I

TAMARA REY: Have a lot more peace with that now. Oh

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Now you're you're open to it, but that's how you started off All right, so then you came to Los Angeles. How'd you meet your?

TAMARA REY: We met at a country music festival called Stagecoach in Palm Springs.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Country music.

TAMARA REY: I know.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You're both country music lovers?

TAMARA REY: I mean, kind of. I wouldn't say it's my absolute favorite. I mean, I love country music. He's from Atlanta, originally. Yeah, it's basically Coachella, but country music in the exact same venue. Contrella?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Contrella.

TAMARA REY: And my friends drunkenly dared me to ask him for a piggyback ride, and that's how we met.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, like, ask him because you were giggling about that guy's cute, or why him?

TAMARA REY: Random.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Total random?

TAMARA REY: Total random. It was like we were doing very obnoxious and mature dares. Like, I had dared one of my friends to, like, this little 14-year-old boy was wearing a shirt that said, I heart motorboating. And I was like, you need to go motorboat that child. And she did. And I was like, I'm ashamed, but, like, yeah, these were very random and not very proud moments.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Drunken Contrella moments. So he gave you a piggyback ride?

TAMARA REY: He gave me a piggyback ride.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. Do you have pictures?

TAMARA REY: We have, like, five photos from the first three seconds we met. So –

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: During the piggyback ride?

TAMARA REY: Uh-huh.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Amazing! I gotta see this.

TAMARA REY: We took photos of all the dares, so, like, that was kind of cool later.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Awesome. So, then, you guys were together a while before you got married?

TAMARA REY: We were together, yeah, four years, got engaged, and then we were, like, engaged for two years. So, six years all in, married.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: During all that time, did you discuss babies?

TAMARA REY: I mean, hypothetically, we had two French bulldogs, which are our babies, and then real babies just seemed like other French bulldogs at the time.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It sounds like you didn't really, like, discuss it one way or the other.

TAMARA REY: Not in the realistic sense, like, in, like, the movie sense, like, like, yes, one day. One day we will have children. One day.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And then you were – you got married, and then you got pregnant not too long after.

TAMARA REY: It was about, like, a little over a year later, and, yeah, we just happened to have 14 weddings that year, and I was like, oh, I'm going to stop birth control, and it'll probably take a long, long time, and it could take years. We don't know our situation, and lo and behold, at this one particular wedding, my friend and I both got pregnant at the exact same wedding.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: No kidding. Wow. That must have been a great wedding.

TAMARA REY: It was, honestly, the most incredible wedding ever, and that same friend, I found out I was pregnant again this time at her house, so she keeps getting me pregnant.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, it sounds like a good time was had by all, if you know.

TAMARA REY: Exactly.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How was your pregnancy? You're, like, the beginning of your first try.

TAMARA REY: I mean, first try was kind of the stereotypical super rough, honestly. It kind of hit me like a truck. I wasn't expecting just the low energy. I remember, like, going to a yoga class and not being able to do it, and I was like, just lay down. I was like, okay. I always thought I couldn't do yoga, but I could do just lay down yoga. And I laid there and cried. I was like, why can't my body do this?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Just literally no energy? Like everything felt so heavy to you?

TAMARA REY: Just so nauseous and, like, would kind of just trigger vomit and lots of aversions, and so I just relied on my childhood foods, and yeah, and then it lifted right around, like, the 15, 16 week mark.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Childhood foods, like mac and cheese, BB and J, that kind of stuff?

TAMARA REY: Yeah, all the chicken nuggets, peanut butter and jelly. Grilled cheese. Grilled cheese and watching Rick and Morty.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So it just lifted when you got to the second trimester?

TAMARA REY: Yeah, it was like coming out of a fog. I mean, I'm so lucky and very grateful that it stopped, because I was like, I don't know how people do this and how, like, it's a lot, and you kind of can't tell anyone what you're going through yet, or you're not supposed to, and so you're just like, this is so weird. I'm like, what's up with you? And you're like, everything. And nothing, don't worry about it. Yeah, I'll be fine.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So did anybody out you? People sometimes when you're like nauseous won't drink anymore.

TAMARA REY: Yeah, then the not drinking thing gave me away. I'm definitely like a Texan when it comes to that. They're like, you're not drinking. You're pregnant. And I was just like, oh, you don't want to say, no, I'm not because that puts it onto the universe. I was just like, don't, don't do that. I'll drink.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. So. trimester is better. I think that's probably when I met you.

TAMARA REY: Yeah I met you pretty early because randomly I was also just trying to do too much and when I was doing a nice little child's pose my hip popped out and I was referred to you by 10 different people that don't know each other all saying that you are the sorcerer. That's not quite a hundred percent right. Oh

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: thank you. I you know more comedy than sorcery but I try my best. 10 different people is still not quite as many as the weddings you had that first year. Exactly. 14 weddings in a year it's one every three weeks.

TAMARA REY: Yeah they were like back-to-back weekends and I ended up being pregnant for a lot of them after the fact which was also not the best but kind of cool. I'm just

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: in my mind I'm like that's so cool that you have that many friends. I have like one friend. Well I feel like it was more like

TAMARA REY: those that was the year of like all of our good family and like Jarrett was in a bunch of the weddings and I was as well and I honestly haven't had hardly any wedding since it was like they all just

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I feel better got married that year. I want to talk about your planning for birth. Let's talk about that. Did you have thoughts on what kind of birth you wanted to have?

TAMARA REY: It was funny like coming into it I remember talking to you I was like I want a c-section and a margarita and then that slowly transformed to actually learning and not being super scared of birth because I was definitely scared before and I you know went down the rabbit hole of like watching the business of being born and listening to your podcast and just being so excited and reading so many books and I was seeking birth stories and seeking birth videos and it went from not wanting to feel a thing to wanting to feel everything in the best way and kind of switched my whole game plan to a home birth with an OB at my house and a midwife and a doula and doing hypno birthing and I honestly

TAMARA REY: really enjoyed my pregnancy after that because I was just fascinated by all of it and if something kind of scared me I knew that I was going in the right direction and it usually revealed something to me about something I needed to

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: learn along the way. When you said you were scared of childbirth were there more specific things that you were fearful of like what were you afraid specifically about? I mean the stereotypical

TAMARA REY: things you see in movies like you're gonna poop on the table or you're like those kind of things like the very dumb things like that everyone just kind of like tries to trip you up on and it was like all those things that like oh no that can't happen to me or like I'm just scared of I think just the process in general like it was one of those things where I knew nothing and I was scared of what I was capable of and after growing the baby and doing all of it you just kind of get stronger along the way and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: it was kind of amazing to watch your transformation just you know yeah fearful anxious and then just really getting confident and excited and sort of pregnancy glowy not to be stereotypical but you just really glad a lot and you're always smiling and just seem very peaceful and happy in your own pregnancy just in a nice way a really sweet way your own pregnancy world it was just like you had your own weather around you and it was always 72 and sunny. Let's take a quick break and then when we come back we'll talk about your actual birth. I'll be right back with Tamara. four times and brand D, four times. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy podcast.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We're talking to Tamara Ray and you're nervous, anxious, fearful about birth. But it sounds like mostly from a place of not really knowing what to expect and what your options were. And then you got excited about birth and instead of planning the caesarian with a margarita, you planned for a home birth with who knows what kind of drinks. And you had a whole team ready to go, right? So your team was an OB.

TAMARA REY: Tamara Ray I've met with Dr. Frischbein and really connect with him. And my midwife was Beth Cannon and I absolutely love her. And after taking hypnobirthing with Alicia Tambury, I mean, honestly, that was like the most magical thing ever. Like it blew my mind. And I was like, this is what I want. And I wanted you to, but you're very busy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, who knows? I never got the phone call. We'll find out how your birth unfolds. But you know, if you had called, I would have done anything I could to get there. I had a Uber helicopter on reserve to just shuffle me over there. So one thing before we get into your birth, I will say, you know, I am lucky to work with really nice people. I'm lucky to help amazingly nice people through their pregnancy journeys and have great colleagues. And I say sometimes on the podcast, this is an amazing human being. You are an amazing human being. And I don't just say that because one day you walked into the office with a whole bag of baked goods out of nowhere. But this is like

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: one of the random things you would do that's just a total surprise for no reason in particular. I just, I got you these and we were weird. We have this whole kosher diet. It's hard to shop for us. You brought all kosher stuff. It was kind of amazing. You're a very special person. Okay.

TAMARA REY: Well, thank you. I think the exact same about you and your whole wellness practice has been the cornerstone of my self care. And I didn't even know that I never did self care until I met you guys. And I didn't realize how mandatory it was in my life. And I hope to always continue that with you guys, whether or not I'm having babies.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Same thing. I mean, it's just, it's a win-win. And okay, we can go on forever. No, you hang up. No, you hang up. But back to your birth. So how did it start?

TAMARA REY: Kind of like a movie. My husband was out of town and he traveled a lot for work, but it was just before term. I was at 36 weeks and four and kind of started having some cramping and some spotting. And I kind of was like, everyone's like, oh, your body's just preparing. But I reached out to my midwife and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How far along were you?

TAMARA REY: 36 weeks and four days.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. So just a little bitty bit before term 37 weeks.

TAMARA REY: Well, all the spotting and the cramping stopped and my best friend was over with me and we were kind of just watching rom com movies, but we listened to the baby on the Doppler for 10 minutes. Everything just calmed down. And then the next morning around six in the morning, I felt the trickle or the gush. I mean, it's a notable feeling. And I went to go check it out. And I was like, hmm, this is interesting. And that's when I reached out to Dr. Frishbrine. He's like, no, I don't know. I was like, are you sure? And I was like, I'm not sure, actually. I was like, this kind of didn't seem like a big enough thing. And then it happened again. And he's like, all right, I'm going to head over just to check things out.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And this is six o'clock in the morning?

TAMARA REY: Six o'clock in the morning.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And was he the first one to come over?

TAMARA REY: Yeah, he just by chance lived super close. And he's like, because he could do a test to see if there was any amniotic fluid. or not and because if not then you know keep going keep going and if so then hey

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: baby's gonna come so you were just having like little gushes were you

TAMARA REY: having contractions at that point none so just gushes of fluid just gushes of fluid and everything was super chill and he came by and confirmed that there was amniotic fluid and he's like but I still wasn't having contractions so he's like I have like a little guest room office he's like I want to go chill in here and just kind of wrap up some paperwork rest or like you know you have long ways to go I was like cool I mean was there any concern at all because

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: it wasn't quite term yet or you were just close enough that nobody really

TAMARA REY: worried about that um because I mean I had a very uneventful pregnancy to everything just kind of really went right and he wasn't worried he was thinking like this could be had plenty of time Jared was on his way home he felt confident about doing the birth that close to term and I trusted him a hundred percent so at that point time I was just excited and hopped in the shower doing my last little baby dance and was there on the way home

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: because you were having these gushes or was he on the way home anyway he was

TAMARA REY: on the way home anyway but bumped up his flight to the first flight in the morning just because I was having cramping and spotting and that was not the usual and so he bumped it up by like an hour and a half and if he hadn't had done that and I even told him not to which is silly but if he hadn't done that he would have missed it okay so what happens next then? Doing my like chill dance thing have music on I'm with my like best friend I like I'm kind of dead set on like this water birth I'm like I know I've envisioned it this is how it's gonna be I see it and I'm just like gonna wanting to be

in the water at all times but still not having contractions like barely like really honestly like they felt like period

TAMARA REY: cramps and nothing crazy and I was doing the hypnobirthing thing but just really kind of enjoying it cuz I was just excited and when I was in the tub I was like drinking a smoothie and I was like I can't believe like this is gonna be it and kind of out of nowhere I felt like I was gonna vomit and I was like I think I'm gonna throw up and she's like really and I was like yeah can you get something and so she's like I'm gonna go tell Dr. Frischbein cuz he was ten feet away and he was like let's get you out of the tub I know you're like relaxing but let's get you out and let's check you and just and he had had an ultrasound on me at the house so everything was pretty smooth up until that point and so of course I throw up and so I

TAMARA REY: stand up and I start having bleeding which in my mind I wasn't panicked but I knew it wasn't normal and at that point I hadn't seen any blood and he's like okay we're gonna move you check you and the bleeding stopped pretty quickly it wasn't like they just kept going it was like boom and done and got me out checked me he's like okay you're at eight centimeters and I mean I'm feeling contractions but they're at least over seven minutes apart but they're still not crazy I mean I was definitely in my own world like I went into my own planet but we were watching my daughter's name is Penny we were listening to her on ultrasound and during that first contraction her heart decelerated a little bit he was like I'm gonna watch again so he watched

TAMARA REY: again he's like I don't like the variation I'm seeing because I feel like we should transfer just to be safe and he's like you're not at 10 centimeters so I don't know how long it will take you to get there if it'll be quick if it won't be quick and Jared walked in the door right that second okay and he's like hey I think we should transfer and he goes and if she goes as quickly as she's this was less than four hours till like 10 a.m. yeah it was 10 a.m. how did you transfer well at this point I'm like kind of coming out of my hip no birthing place and he's like I think we should call an ambulance in case she ends up with having the baby on the way like if they need something and I was like okay and we kind of just

TAMARA REY: said okay okay and just went with it and my doula and midwife hadn't even made it to my house yet oh wow so it's just you and dr. first friend and your friend and my friend and so we call an ambulance there there five minutes later, and I'm in my robe and I'm on my way to the hospital.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And was the ride uneventful or were things happening on the way?

TAMARA REY: I was definitely having contractions. And now that I wasn't in my like peaceful space. And now that my home birth kind of just went out the window, I was definitely like, you know, it's almost like everything was happening in slow motion. And I was like, Oh, well, and you stopped caring. You're like, okay, well, my baby's still coming. Everything's going to be okay. We ended up going not to Cedars, which was the plan. We ended up going to St Joe's because it was closer to our house. And we just kind of got very unlucky at that point to kind of get met with a emergency room laborist who had a lot of judgments and a lot of negativity and wouldn't speak to my doctor or my husband and was like very confused by me.

TAMARA REY: And she kept saying, I would compromise the health of my baby over and over again. And I, in the moment knew that whatever was happening wasn't about me. And I just kind of stayed very calm. And luckily my doula got to the hospital and was able to kind of get me back into a calmer state. And my nurse had worked with Dr. Fishbein, so she was in great communication with me and him. And at that point I was at 10 centimeters.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Why did she say jeopardize just because you had planned a home birth or?

TAMARA REY: I think it was, yeah, the judgment of coming in in a robe and maybe she thought I was trying to birth at home by myself. I mean, who knows what her assumptions were. I think she was just more worried and trying to like protect herself in case something went wrong. Liability. That's my best guess.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You had to push liability off of herself. They checked your service and they found centimeters. Were they monitoring the baby?

TAMARA REY: So her heart was decelerating, but I was like feeling the whole ring of fire and I was like, I'm going to push. And my nurse was like, okay. And as soon as I started pushing, I mean, I even heard it on the monitor. She like grabbed my arm and she's like, she told me to stop because her heart rate just like plummeted. And at that point they're like, we recommend a C-section immediately. And I looked at my husband, my doctor, they were like, yes. And I go, yes, let's go. And my labor was just like nowhere to be found for like 15 minutes. Like the anesthesiologist was even waiting on her. Like he was sitting there with me, but long story short, she was out within 30 minutes of me arriving at the hospital. And I heard her cry three times.

TAMARA REY: I saw the most beautiful look on my husband's face. And I mean, you feel everything. It's almost like without like zero pain. It's like, you can feel them leave you. It wasn't the experience I planned on at all, but all of that kind of melted away the second she was existing earth side, and I kind of expected that to be like, okay. And that's just going to go in my arms. And we're going to go back to plan a, and things just kind of took a turn after that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, my, it's sort of done the birth. You were planning after you changed your plan. Originally, minus the Margarita you were planning unnecessary. And let's take another break. And when we come back, we'll find out what happens next. Welcome back to the informed pregnancy podcast. We're talking to Tamara Ray and your planned home birth took a quick turn when your doctor who was going to deliver with you at home, so that the baby's heart rate was decelerating during your contractions. So you called an ambulance, went to the hospital, got a really judgy hospitalist there, but you know, they checked you. You had progressed to 10 centimeters, ready to push. And the baby was on the monitor, still kind of decelerating during your contractions.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You gave a big push. The baby really reacted negatively to that. Decided to quickly go for a cesarean and the baby was out. You heard some cries and then you said things took a turn again. What happened?

TAMARA REY: So I just want to preface that my little girl is thriving and doing incredible. So the story has a very happy ending, but my husband went to see my daughter. She gripped onto his finger

and he was like kind of giving me the play by play because you're on the table, you're not moving. And I couldn't like see, and they're like, Hey, we're going to take her. Um, like her coloring was like not as red and like. she was having some trouble breathing. So I was like, okay, go. And I just told my husband, I was like, go, go with her, go. And that moment I knew nothing and we didn't know anything for a little bit because they didn't exactly know for a little bit, but very long story short is they deemed that I had a placental abruption during labor.

TAMARA REY: Well, depending on the person and depending on the case, it can mean a lot of things, but it just means when your placenta detaches or separates, or I guess it can also mean like broken blood vessels within your placenta. It can mean a detachment from your umbilical cord to your placenta. It can mean a lot of things, but in the case of mine, they couldn't even like really pinpoint exactly what happened, but I had a very strange placenta. A normal placenta is one lobe ish. I mean, I think you probably know more about this than I do, but my placenta had four, four lobes and the umbilical cord is kind of attached to my placenta where muscle fascia was, and it wasn't really connected to an exact lobe.

TAMARA REY: So it was a very strange placenta according to my doctor and midwife. They're like, I have never seen this before.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So when labor started, is it because the baby kind of pulled away from your placenta, that the faulty cord or they don't know?

TAMARA REY: No idea.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. But somehow the placenta stopped functioning.

TAMARA REY: Well, and they, they don't think that it was like, Oh, it stopped functioning completely because obviously for, I mean, I don't think she would have survived had it done that. So I think like aspects of it were still functioning, just I think she was losing blood slowly. Um, so when she was born, she was missing about like a third of her blood volume and was oxygen deprived because that's how they get their oxygen is through your placenta. So she went into immediate cooling. Luckily St. Joe's had that option and was diagnosed with H I E, which is known as hypoxic ischemic insethylopathy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You said it right. Yeah, perfect. Um, unfortunately it's a terrible thing to happen, right? So that's, um, essentially newborn brain damage that's caused by not having enough oxygen or blood flow.

TAMARA REY: Yeah. Well, um, her doctor did a great job of kind of explaining it, of just when certain seals dive down to depths of the ocean, they hold their breath and all of their blood goes to their brain and their heart to protect those things first. So you'll start to have multiple organ failure. And then if it gets to a really bad point, it'll affect the heart and then the brain. And she was on cooling for three days and things kind of got worse and worse. And she was having kidney failure and not having any output of fluids. So she started swelling and at that point we transferred to children's LA and things got a little bit worse before they got better. But then every day after that was just like a little tiny miracle step in

TAMARA REY: the right direction.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, I can't imagine. But with the days going by, you don't have information. Were they able to give you a prognosis?

TAMARA REY: Not right away. I mean, I have a funny story, but the first like 24 hours this NICU had a, like a webcam so you can see your baby because I couldn't get up yet. So they give me like a little login and long story short, I'm watching this baby and I'm like, not feeling very connected to it. And I'm like, I don't know. I'm like, man, I can't even recognize my own baby. And it turns out I'm watching this baby for like seven hours and then this woman starts breastfeeding it. And I'm like, Oh my God. And I said, my husband down there, I'm like, this woman's feeding my baby and they turn off the cameras. And I'm just like sitting there like a soap opera, but like the camera has been turned off and the camera finally comes back on

TAMARA REY: like 40 minutes later and it is my baby. And it was instant. Like I knew it and she was hooked up to way more machines and they're like, we're really sorry. We had it on the wrong baby.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, look, now we know that Penny's healthy and beautiful and thriving, right? Um, how long was that process?

TAMARA REY: Very long. I mean, even when we got to children's LA, they were talking to us about quality of life and how she could have no brain activity and how she may never walk or eat on her own or breathe on her own. And we were having very serious conversations about very big things. And I just definitely gave myself moments to totally break down, but I kind of would only give myself five or 10 minutes. And then I had to go back into fight mode because I had little angel fighting harder than I ever could. So I like, it was very easy to go into that definitely had to do a lot of processing and healing after we got out of the hospital.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: But how long was she in the hospital for?

TAMARA REY: a little bit over a month. So we were actually not there as long as they projected us to be. Again, it was very miraculous.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Was there a better prognosis?

TAMARA REY: Yes, so by the time she left, she had gotten off of oxygen and her kidneys started functioning so she started having output but her kidney levels were still not regular or in range yet. She had started eating on her own so it changed my whole journey of nursing right away. She didn't even get breast milk for about six days because she was just on IVs and they started doing a feeding tube so you start pumping right away and you don't know if you're gonna get to feed your baby and it's a crazy thing. And luckily she started feeding more and more and then took a bottle and then once she was drinking breast milk, honestly everything just started coming full circle and all of her brain scans. I mean, her neurologist was like,

TAMARA REY: with babies, their brains have so much neuroplasticity it's really hard to say. She's like, we're not seeing big blanket spots of damage. We're seeing kind of just across the board that things were affected. They go, we won't even know how this affects her until she's older. But the fact

that she was breathing on her own and eating on her own and she had a very strong latch to where she was doing some reflexive things and then some things that were very telling that obviously her brain was working in some ways because you can't do all those things without it working.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I know you said you gave her breast milk. Were you able to breast feed her or did you have to pump and bottle feed?

TAMARA REY: We had to start off bottle feeding and the process went into, I had to dry breastfeed her first so I'd have to pump first and then let her practice essentially latching without milk because I didn't know if she'd be able to regulate the flow on her own if it'd be too much. And then luckily she really took to that and I was so relieved because that's something I really wanted and prayed for and envisioned as well. So we pretty much from that point on had to do a lot of bottle feeding and then I would kind of also nurse her as well but we had to really keep track of her feeds and how much she was eating because she was born smaller and her growing was a huge priority.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How big was she at birth?

TAMARA REY: She was five pounds and four ounces.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, little. You know, I could talk to you forever in your stories. You know, there's so many elements to it from your initial plans to how it came through and I mean in retrospect it seems like your doctor at home just realized quickly that things needed to be in a hospital and you transported very quickly by ambulance with not a whole lot of time. Just ended up in a place where they were able to get Penny out quickly. You know, one of the areas where medicine I think has really advanced is the neonatal care, NICU care and all the things that you mentioned from neonatal cooling onward are just modern marvels that help us really save these babies and it's incredible. I think that combined with your fighting spirit

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and Penny's fighting spirit really pulled her through. I wonder two things. How do you recover from that emotionally? You know, once she's okay, that's one thing. What does it take for you to be okay again?

TAMARA REY: Oh, good question. I was kind of lucky to find a couple. I honestly was like looking at Instagram and like looking at hashtags for like HIE baby and just looking up things and I happened to find some moms who planned on home births, who did emergency C-sections, who had babies diagnosed with HIE and their babies are doing well as well and I found kind of this network of women who had older kids, who had been diagnosed three years prior and are leading healthy, happy, for the most part you would say normal lives but I would say the biggest help honestly was therapy and I have no problem saying that your wife is the most wonderful postpartum therapist I could have ever found because I couldn't leave the hospital

TAMARA REY: and I didn't know how to remotely start processing and it's hard because even once you're home you are very anxious about anything ever happening again and every new mom is probably anxious to a degree and then mine just kind of got the heat turned up. So we had to quarantine at home for about four months and afterwards just until she was big enough to remotely even start going to receive shots or any of that kind of stuff because she wasn't even 10 pounds until she was around four months.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And you said quarantine but this is way before the pandemic, this is your own personal quarantine.

TAMARA REY: Oh, this is before quarantining was a thing and I mean I was just so happy to be home with her. I mean all these things that seem like huge. huge, huge things you realize like they matter, but they don't matter as much as the baby in your arms. So you just like honestly, she pulled me through, my husband pulled me through. I mean, we have still been on that roller coaster since and it's something that has affected us both so differently and we processed very differently. But just Penny getting healthier every day was like the thing kind of driving us through and obviously now being pregnant again. I thought I had processed most of it and you know, some little things can creep back up here and there.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, how could they not? For sure. I mean, if they didn't, I would question your humanness. I mean, you're just human and those experience and memories are with you forever, you know, and it's great that Penny pulled through and that you've done a lot of healing, but it's part of who you are forever.

TAMARA REY: I mean, it's crazy how meant to be some of the things were and a lot of the synchronicity of what happened and where it's brought me now and her and even with this next pregnancy. Yeah, I'm super grateful, but it's also taught me like, it's okay to be like the power of the word and. Like you can be extremely grateful and like mad and have rage about what happened and be sad and depressed about what happened I definitely had to process all of the very real things that I kind of didn't get to in the hospital. I mean, they definitely didn't go anywhere. I had to unpack those bad boys and I'm sure I'm still doing that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, I think it's a very long process. I just wonder, I mean, we're at the end of our time here, but you're in your third trimester now again.

TAMARA REY: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Do you, I'm almost afraid to ask, do you have a plan for how to get this baby out of here?

TAMARA REY: I do have a plan because of the high risk nature of everything that happened last time, we are going to be at a hospital and because now that we know to look for certain things for me as well with my more in-depth anatomy scans, my placenta is presenting as in multiple lobes again. I was also diagnosed with gestational diabetes this time around. Just to add to the mix. Which was super terrible at first and then after about four days of being really mad about it, I was like, oh man, I wish I kind of ate like this all the time. I feel wonderful.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, that's nice. So I guess no cookies for me this time, but are you just controlling with diet and exercise or are you taking medication too?

TAMARA REY: Yeah, super lucky just getting to control with diet and exercise and honestly like I felt an immediate shift in my energy once I wasn't kind of fueling the glucose monster in the wrong ways. And I mean, I honestly knew none of this. So it's really just an opportunity of a lot of education. And I know she was on your podcast, but Kelly Lavek is a huge, huge source of information about all things

diet and body love, she's amazing. Yeah, I think it's just been eye-opening to realize there's so many options.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Because of that, and also your placenta looking multi-level again, and also your experience with Penny, you'll be at a hospital with an obstetrician.

TAMARA REY: Correct. And depending on, they're doing another anatomy scan as I get to the very end, because I'm at 34 weeks now. So a little closer to 37, we'll do another one. And it's looking like I may have to do a C-section, which I'm at peace with, but I might also, depending on how things really present at the end, could have the option for a V-back. So we're taking that one day at a time. But I just know that obviously this time has already been extremely different. We're having a boy this time around and everything's been different except for my really cool supportive team taking care of me, which is you and all like the best parts of my last pregnancy. I kept that through this one. And honestly, that's been really healing as well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, I thought you were amazing before any of these things happened, but to live through that experience and to still just every time I see you, you're always so positive. And I don't know, you just seem to focus on the half full, even when it's three quarters empty. So I'm inspired by you for that. It sounds like with birth getting closer now, if I'm reading you correctly, it sounds like you've made your peace with whichever birth. If it's gonna be cesarean, it will be cesarean. If it's gonna be vaginal, if it's safe to try vaginal, you'll try. But you're okay either way.

TAMARA REY: Yeah, I feel like I've, I mean, I thought I knew this before, but I know that they definitely choose the way that they come. Um, I think being prepared and having all the knowledge of what you want is very important and things will go differently in some aspect. It could be small, it could be big, but yeah, like women are incredible and it's opened my eyes to every single mom around me and every human walking around like you're a miracle. Like everyone's a miracle.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's so true. I mean, that's the truest of all hashtags. Women are amazing. Moms are amazing. Even working in ambulances and emergency rooms, you see people sometimes suffering and how many times I've heard somebody say, I just want my mom, you know, that's just so powerful what you do. All of you. All right. I really am super grateful for you joining me on the podcast and sharing your story with our audience. I know that these stories are sometimes hard for people to share and they're so personal and also hard sometimes to listen to, especially if you're pregnant. What I do know because we get emails and social media messages from people who end up in a similar situation, you know, these things happen.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Birth is not perfect and complications arise. And when other people find themselves in a similar situation like you did, you found other people who had HIE and their babies were doing well. Those are the messages that we get. People who find themselves in that situation or a family member or a friend and somebody Just coming forth so open and honest like you really helps them tremendously. So I'm so grateful that you're here. I'm grateful that you're healthy and Penny's healthy. I'm excited for this upcoming birth for you. And hopefully you'll come back and share your second birth story.

TAMARA REY: I would love that. I hope it'll just be all super amazing and exciting. There were so many twists and turns. We never expected this great thing to happen. Yeah. There's like two ways to look at everything. And I mean, I'm very grateful for even what would be said as bad because it brought me here. And I just know this time will be different.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Different how?

TAMARA REY: I don't know. But I'll let you know.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We will know very soon. I'm sending you the most positive energy and vibes for an incredible birth.

TAMARA REY: Thank you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And as always, who knows if they'll even let me in during the pandemic. But if you call, I will come running right over, especially since you'll be very close to my house. All right. Thanks again for joining us at home. Thanks for listening to our podcast. If you have questions or topic suggestions, believe it or not, I read them all. You can write to info at informedpregnancy.com.

Enjoying the Informed Pregnancy Podcast?

Visit us at **informedpregnancy.com** for episodes, articles, and resources for pregnancy, birth, and beyond.

Want more? Subscribe to **Informed Pregnancy+** at **informedpregnancy.tv** for films, series, and exclusive content.