**Newborn Joys & Challenges: Real Mom Insights S5|EP122**

The ages and stages and the things that people go through at the different ages and stages are very similar. So what one mom goes through, another one is very likely to go through. So if you have got an eight-week-old baby, two-month-old baby, or anything around that age or coming up to that, then this podcast is for you.

So tell us, I mean, you've told us that smiling has been one of the bigger joys of this stage. What else has been great at this stage? Like, I suppose wholesomeness of like, wow, this is really what we wanted and it's all kind of like working out in a way. I know there are ups and downs and all of that, but as a whole, just feeling like so blessed and like happy to have both of them has definitely been great.

So at eight weeks, what are the challenges that you're facing? Welcome to Sense by Meg Fora, the podcast that's brought to you by ParentSense, the app that takes guesswork out of parenting. If you're a new parent, then you are in good company. Your host Meg Fora is a well-known OT, infant specialist, and the author of eight parenting books.

Each week, we're going to spend time with new mums and dads, just like you, to chat about the week's wins, the challenges, and the questions of the moment. Subscribe to the podcast, download the ParentSense app, and catch Meg here every week to make the most of that first year of your little one's life. And now, meet your host.

Welcome back, mums and dads. I am Meg Fora and this is Sense by Meg Fora. And I'm absolutely delighted that you have joined me here today.

This style of podcast is one of my favourites because we get to talk to real mums and just find out a little bit more about their journey. And you know, it's such an interesting thing because, and you'll find this, that the ages and stages and the things that people go through at the different ages and stages are very similar. So, what one mum goes through, another one is very lucky to go through.

So, if you have got an eight-week-old baby, a two-month-old baby, or anything around that age or coming up to that, then this podcast is for you because today we are going to welcome Jessica and Rachel. Welcome, Jessica. Hi, lovely to be here.

Lovely to see you. And most of you cannot see Jessica, but she has got little Rachel in her arms, who is a little eight-week-old, beautiful bundle, pitch dark hair in a carrier with her. So, welcome to you both.

Really lovely to have you. And Jessica, you are a mum of two little ones. Tell us a little bit about your family and your journey to having Rachel.

So, we were very blessed, actually, with both of our babies. My family, I'm married to my husband and we've been together about 10 years now, married for five and decided to start our family. And it happened, we were very lucky, happened very easily for us, had our little boy.

Yeah, that was an experience. I think first time parenting is crazy. It is.

And then decided after, you know, they always say that you, in the first year and a half, never want another child. And then they start to be cute and all the toddler things come out. And we were trapped in the same way and decided to have a second and always wanted him to have a sibling because we both have three siblings and my husband has two.

So, we always knew we wanted more than one. And then, you know, I got pregnant with Rachel and the rest is history. Amazing.

And how, I mean, how was it the first few weeks of having two little ones at home? Because that's often quite a drown. Yeah. So, I think we are very, very blessed with a little boy who is very gentle in nature and he absolutely loves his sister.

In fact, sometimes a bit too much. A lot of squishing and wanting to kiss her and, you know, so we're embracing it as much as possible. I think he'll probably get upset with her as soon as she starts stealing his toys.

Yeah. That's actually very common, by the way. So, very often we say that, you know, sibling rivalry and all the antics that go with people talk about, you know, that go with having a new sibling born actually don't start to arise until they're smiling and very cute.

And usually by about 12 weeks. Getting all the attention. Exactly.

By about 12 weeks, the toddler starts to think, hold on, this one's not going back where they came from. Yeah. I can imagine that happening because he, I mean, he's also two.

So, it's, there's a lot of me, me, me at the moment. So, he is, we are able to give him a lot of our attention still. But as that attention moves, it is going to be different.

But I also think we, we decided to, my pregnancy was quite difficult. I was very big and very uncomfortable in the last few months. And so, my husband took over bath time and bedtime.

And so, that's helped a lot with this transition because my son will actually tell me, no mama, we must be with the baby. And so, that's also helped a lot. But yeah, the transition has been easier than I thought it would.

Yeah. And you know, there's, that's very interesting because there's some research that talks about sibling rivalry. And one of the protective factors around sibling rivalry is if you've got a very involved other partner.

And the reason for that is that the toddler doesn't really feel it as a massive affront and a huge loss of your time because there's another parent who's taken over. And actually, it's quite novel and quite, and they like it. So, you know, you know, I think having a very involved dad who kind of takes over and does bath time or whatever it is, is very important.

So, that's amazing that you've got that. Yeah. I always tell all my friends, don't have a baby with someone that doesn't want to share the load because it is a big thing, especially as a, I will be a working mom.

And so, if you want to have that part of your life too, you do need someone to support you in the home stuff as well. Absolutely. And have you taken maternity leave at this stage? Yeah.

So, I'm very lucky. I'm a teacher and I get four months and then I'm getting, I'm taking an extra two months as unpaid just because, yeah, we just thought that that's what we did for our firstborn. And so, we're doing it again this time.

Oh, that's wonderful. So, you get to be at home with her. Do you find that being at home with her all day is draining and are you at home with both of them? No, luckily my firstborn goes to school, he's got a little nursery down the road, which helps a lot because the weekends are obviously quite manic.

But I find for me particularly, I do find this beginning part very taxing because you are doing the same thing over and over and over again. You basically spend all your time trying to get the baby to sleep and then waiting for the baby to wake up again. So, I do find that a bit taxing.

Yeah, it is. And you have this amazing, this incredible loss of self and the sleep deprivation and it's just, I mean, it does feel quite relentless at times. Yeah, definitely.

So, she's eight weeks old. Has she started smiling yet? Yeah, it's the most beautiful little thing. It's very rewarding.

It's like one of those first rewarding moments, which is great. At what age did she start smiling? Literally on the dot six weeks, like on her six weeks. It was crazy.

It's actually incredible because smiling is one of those milestones and there are a couple of them, sitting is another one, that happen almost for most babies on the day of six weeks and sitting at six months. And do you mean you definitely get your early smilers? So, little ones where kind of at four weeks, you're thinking, I think that's a smile or maybe even they really are smiling by then. And you also get slightly late smilers that come on at like eight weeks, but 90% of babies will smile at six weeks.

And it's just, I mean, it's just makes everything worthwhile, doesn't it? Yeah, especially those late nights. You're like, I think, so I'm breastfeeding and I feel like, you know, they'll come off and they'll give you that little milk drunk smile. And it just makes it like so beautiful for you actually.

Yeah, no, absolutely. So tell us, I mean, you've told us that smiling has been one of the bigger joys of this stage. What else has been great at this stage? We can get onto challenges and we can talk through some of those just now, but what have you loved about the stage? So I feel, especially coming in, it's like second time mom, I feel far more confident in myself.

And I've really enjoyed that. Kind of having a more, I found the zero to one, like jump far more difficult than the one to two. And just like the feeling of like, wow, this is my little family.

And just these moments of like, I suppose, wholesomeness of like, wow, this is really what we wanted. And it's all kind of like working out in a way. I know there are ups and downs and all of that, but as a whole, just feeling like so blessed and like happy to have both of them has definitely been great.

Yeah, I must say, you know, I definitely found that and not everybody finds that by the way, but I found the jump from zero to one child was an absolute drown and one to two children was totally manageable. And I then went on and had three kids and the jump from two to three was again, a bit of a drown. And I think it's just because, you know, from one to two, you know, it's, you've got two adults.

So as a mom, very often your workload hasn't increased. It was always big because you had the one now you've got, you know, your partner takes on quite a bit. It might be more, my husband probably would think that there was more of a jump from one to two because he had to take that on.

And certainly two to three was a big jump. But I also found that and also delighted in, because you've got a little bit more perspective, you know, when you think, when you've got a 17 week old, who's just not sleeping and it's your first, you think it's going to be like that for the rest of their life. Whereas when it's your second one, you go, okay, hold on.

So I know, I know the stage and they will move through it. Yeah, I definitely felt that way. Yeah.

And also having like done all, because obviously I did, I've done your sleep course. I've done the sensory course. I've done the feeding course.

I've done a lot of the parents sense courses. And so just having that like knowledge of like, there's a little tip that you could use that might work to, to calm her down quicker or create a similar sense of like routine and that type of thing. It's definitely made me a more confident parent.

The second time we're going in the first time, although I've read baby sense, I didn't really understand what was going to happen. Um, but yeah, this time definitely feel more confident and just these little things that you put into place that make your life a bit easier. That's excellent.

So you mentioned the courses in parent sense. Do you use the parent sense app as well? Here and there I use it. Um, I don't track on it really, but I use it as a guide.

So like everywhere, every week I will go into it and I will, um, like look at all the information because every week there's new, like the videos and all of that type of thing. But then I'll look at what your routine is saying, like is the ideal routine and then see how can I try to like implement it into my, how I'm doing it basically. Brilliant.

Oh, that's so good. That's such an intuitive way to do it. So at eight weeks, what are the challenges that you're facing? Um, okay.

So breastfeeding has not been amazing for me. Um, it wasn't the first time either, although I did carry on breastfeeding for eight months. Um, I find it a challenge and I think I always will.

It's just the, the latch and the, um, they, the lactation consultant told us that she has a lip tie, not a tongue tie, but a lip tie. And, um, that then made us ask the pediatrician and the pediatrician said, there is no tongue tie. So it's like these two conflicting, um, like opinions and just deciding what we're going to do about it.

Um, whether we're going to do anything really, uh, that has been a challenge. So I must tell you that, um, and it's so interesting that we're speaking today, which is on a Thursday and my podcasts always come out on a Thursday, but the podcast that is coming out today, which for reference for other moms, it's episode 111 is an incredible interview, absolutely incredible interview on breastfeeding, specifically looking at tongue tie. And, um, you must go and listen today.

And if it's not out already, it'll be out in the next couple of hours. Um, I interviewed a lactation consultant in America called Jacqueline Kinzer, and she is actually a, she's not just a lactation consultant. She's actually a lecturer as well.

So she lectures in lactation consultancy and trains people and she's extraordinary. The amount of sense that was in that particular episode, episode 111, it really is worth going and having a listen to that. So, um, but you know, it really is so difficult because, um, you know, I mean, I think, I think for me, I also had a real challenge with breastfeeding.

It didn't come easily. Some people just have got oodles of milk and latches are easy. And for me, it was quite painful as well, which, um, isn't really usually the case.

Um, and persisting with it is really, really tricky. So, um, and especially if people are giving you conflicting advice around tongue ties. Yeah, it's, it's been tough.

And so we've just started to just give it a little bit of time and, um, see how things go and, um, I'll use the shields, which I think is also something that there's not a lot of information about out there. Um, the use of a, of a nipple shield, um, I don't know if it's a taboo thing to talk about, but it really is difficult to find any kind of information about what it's, whether it's making more gas or wind and, you know, this whole thing. So it then leads into like a lot of guilt of, am I making her, um, gasier and is that why she's waking up and not sleeping in the day and, and, you know, things like that.

So definitely, um, that has been a challenge, but it's also something that I know will get better because the same thing happened with my son. So with your son, did you also use a nipple shield with him? Yes, we did. Um, it was also even in the hospital, they told me I need a shield.

Um, and then the lactation consultant didn't say he had a tongue tie, but then we had him go to a chiropractor and the chiropractor pointed out the tongue tie and then we got it snipped. So then eventually we could, um, but there was a bit later in our like whole journey. Um, well, it's really interesting.

I mean, it might be worth you actually having a session with Jacqueline Kinzer who on that, on that podcast, um, podcast 111, you will actually hear her details as well. Um, and, um, she does, even though she's in America, she does online checks and so on. So, um, because as she said, it's such a specialized area, you know, it's, it's, it, if a baby's got a tongue tie, it does need to be dealt with.

It's not, it's not a fallacy and it's, um, yeah, makes it more tricky. So feeding has been challenging. Um, do you feel like you have enough milk? I think I have too much milk actually, cause it's like, she's drowning a little bit sometimes.

Um, but I know that also comes with the shields because they, they don't stay on. And so they slip off and then it's like a little shower for her. And did you try and feed her without the shield? Yes.

And it was going perfectly well. Um, but she was struggling massively with, um, I could hear she was getting a lot of air. So the latch wasn't like a hundred percent.

That's why I called in the lactation consultant and then she was like, no, um, to make it a bit easier, use the shield. Okay. Very interesting.

Yeah. I mean, it certainly isn't something that I would venture to give you any advice on because that's the type of thing that you do need somebody to actually check in on. Um, but that can be a real challenge.

And so how frequently is she feeding at the moment? So I feed her every, um, like three hours. There are days where she goes like one, she's very like, I must say textbook-ish if I'm honest. Um, we're very lucky.

So she's been doing three hours, sometimes a full hour in one of the feeds of the day. Um, if she's a bit more unsettled in the day, it will be two and a half hours. Um, and then at nighttime we feed, uh, we'll be putting her down at around like eight, between eight and nine.

And then she's sleeping until around two in the morning. Okay. And then again at six.

Okay. Well, that's amazing. So she's effectively actually only having one, one waking, which is really amazing.

She's doing extremely well. And that, you know, and often I think when moms are battling with that, it's, it's often because they are overfeeding during the day. So feeding kind of every hour or two can lead to little ones that don't stretch nicely at night.

So you've obviously got that one quite nicely sped down. Yeah, we were, we, just decided like from the beginning, we're going to try see if we can. So we never did the whole, I know it sounds, I don't know, maybe it's like bad, but we didn't do demand feeding as such.

Um, we did, or like when she was sleeping long periods of time in those first couple of weeks, I would wake her and, um, get her to feed. And she also had a bit of jaundice. So that also helped with that.

And, um, yeah, that's pushed it. Yeah. So that, that jaundice is interesting.

If your little one is slightly, looks slightly tanned. I had three jaundice babies. So I know they weren't severely jaundiced, but I had to feed very regularly in the early days to get all of that bilirubin moving through.

Um, so that is important. That's excellent. And so are there any other challenges that you're facing with her? This episode is brought to us by Parent Sense, the all-in-one baby and parenting app that helped you make the most of your baby's first year.

Don't you wish someone would just tell you everything you need to know about caring for your baby, when to feed them, how to wean them, and why they won't sleep. Parent Sense app is like having a baby expert on your phone, guiding you to parent with confidence. Get a flexible routine, daily tips and advice personalized for you and your little one.

Download Parent Sense app now from your app store and take the guesswork out of parenting. That's excellent. And so are there any other challenges that you're facing with her? Just wind, I guess.

Um, but I, I think that that's something that also everyone is always like, oh, um, it's colic, but it's actually, I think most kids do deal with like wind in the beginning. And that's just something that is not also spoken about as much as I think it should be. It's like, you really are going to struggle in the first few weeks with burping the baby and should they're going to have these little trapped winds, but it's going to get better, you know? It's very interesting.

There was some research and I actually posted a reel of it on my Instagram about two weeks ago. Um, there was some research that looked at a massive number of studies. I think it was 156 studies where they looked at whether or not, did you see it? Whether or not, I saw this.

Yeah. Whether I'm winding a baby actually helped. And what they found was that it didn't decrease the amount that they posited in actual fact, they often brought up more milk if they were being winded and it didn't help to, to kind of just settle them either.

And, you know, I've always believed that I have always believed that winds are something that we kind of, um, we almost give them too much weight. Like we also give teething too much weight. And, you know, so I think when a little one is niggly, we think, Oh my goodness, it must be a trapped wind.

And then we, what we start to do is we start to pet them and burp them and kind of fuss with them. And the more we do that, the more we stimulate them. And then you end up with an overstimulated baby who really is like a cycle.

It is a cycle. And so when they become fussy, they're then much more irritable. And then you think wind.

And so it turns into the cycle. So my suggestion is only to wind a little one for five minutes in any stretch. So, you know, if you, if you finished feeding, um, and you've, and you've done a quick wind of just five minutes of being upright, a little bit of patting, and it hasn't come up is to actually put them down or to let them settle then, um, and to stop pursuing it because I think that actually causes the overstimulation.

Definitely. And I find that then you put them down and then when you, if they do start to fuss again, if you pick them up again, they either like, it just comes out naturally or you find like when you pick them up later on, once they're having the next feed, then they've like got a lot of gas, then they'll have a little fart and then it's fine. Yeah.

Yeah, exactly. And I've always said, if it doesn't come up the one way, it'll come out the other side and it's just absolutely fine. And look, I mean, I think the fact that little ones do niggle a little bit as winds move through their tummy is because they're dealing with what we call interoception, which is interior signals.

Um, you know, other little gas bubbles and, you know, other little refluxes and those things are not, doesn't make them pathological. It makes them normal, but something that little one just has to learn to navigate. And I think very often in early parenting, we pathologize things that actually are not problems, you know, like we, you know, and it's the same with teething when that comes about, you know, this is everything gets blamed on teething, you know, that they've got a fever, that they've got a runny nose, that they're not sleeping, that they've got a rash, you know, and actually it's just a stage of life that they're navigating.

And I think very often the things that we become anxious about are actually things that we just need to be normalized. Um, very interestingly, Kath and I had a conversation around reflux the other day and reflux is one of those things, you know, when babies pass it up, milk curds, that people get quite hysterical about and they try to give them antacids or they think they're uncomfortable because of it. But the actual reality is, is that 99% of reflux is, does not cause illness.

Um, it doesn't cause lung infections. It doesn't cause lack of weight gain. It's just something they move through.

And the treatment of reflux is actually the problem. So, um, so giving you a little one antacids or giving them proton pump inhibitors, which are generally the two strategies that doctors use, um, that terribly messes with the gut microbiome. And so long-term we're seeing babies with a lot of issues coming up, including emotional issues around, you know, anxiety and so on that is grounded in not having a great microbiome, which goes back to giving them either antibiotics or reflux medications too early in life.

And, um, you know, Kath has been at Espergan the last couple of weeks or the last week. And, um, and she, she, you know, she was feeding back on that and just there's a lot of research coming out on it now. Yeah.

It's like, um, because it would have only started this whole, it's almost like a trend, right? All of these things become almost you as a mom are asking your mom friends, what did they do? And they're saying, oh, use this and this product. And then it's actually now in the research, they can actually research it and see that it's wrong. Yeah, absolutely.

And, you know, when I look back on my, my youngest child has quite severe lactose intolerance and always had, I mean, when she was a tiny baby all the way through, and now she can have absolutely no lactose because she reacts, her gut reacts very badly to it. Um, so she was a massively reflux baby. I mean, she used to, she could, she could bring up like, you know, half a feed and she was just always bringing up.

So, um, and what does, you know, I think in some respects, I wished I hadn't treated it with proton pump inhibitors because we did, we neutralized her stomach acid with PPIs. And, you know, I think now looking back, I wish I'd just muddled through it a little bit more. If I just let her, if I'd not worried about it, she was still gaining weight.

It wasn't like she was losing weight and she didn't have lung infections. Those are the two things that you worry about with reflux. And she was a little bit niggly, but that was probably more sensory than it was anything to do with what was going on in the gut, you know? And I think an encouragement, and I mean, Kath and I have often spoken about this encouragement moms as to, you know, sometimes you need to muddle through the stuff that feels really hard because, you know, you know, it'll end.

It doesn't have to be treated. It doesn't have to be pathologized. Definitely.

And I also think that the whole trusting your own guts and trusting yourself as a mom and also as a dad, I mean, I think that also comes down to the whole having support and everything like that, because the more support you have, the less you feel stressed out about a situation. I know my husband is the one that calms me down immediately. I'll be like, oh, this is what's going on.

And then he'll be like, just calm down. Let's just take it. Let's see if it's still like this in a week.

And then we'll revisit it rather than immediately wanting to go to the doctor or whatever it is. So just have that person to ground you a little bit as well. Absolutely.

And I mean, that's such a good point. I think having support is a massive thing. And the other thing, which I love that your husband said is, let's see how it is in a week's time.

And it doesn't even have to be in a week's time. Let's see how it is tomorrow, you know, and, you know, just giving yourself 24 hours and seeing whether or not it still is a really major issue is a good thing. Go have a nap.

Go have a nap and see if it's still a problem, because it could just be that you're tired. Exactly. Yeah.

I mean, in the early days, I think the big things that you want to be watching for are fevers with real niggliness and no eating, no feeding. So you would want to watch that and weight gain. And, you know, if your baby's gaining weight, they're not running a fever and then are feeding well, then, you know, probably nine out of 10 things can just be passed off as a developmental stage that they will move through.

And, you know, there's also research that shows that even if your baby's massively colicky and very, very fussy, 99% of those babies at 12 weeks will progress into being a calm baby and there won't be any issues. You know, there's a very small percentage of babies where early infant fussing does indicate dysregulation. And we actually did an episode on that.

If parents are interested with Tove, a couple of episodes, episode 104, I think is the one that we did. And it's really worth listening to. Oh, no, it's not.

Sorry, it's 113 people can go and listen to. And it's really interesting because we look at what happens if the fussing doesn't go away when we think it's going to go away. Yeah.

And it's just another thing is my husband also says she just doesn't like being a newborn. And, you know, because I do think like it is it's a tough time. The first three months is not just tough on you, but it's tough on the baby.

And sometimes it is just discomfort from like being alive. Yeah, no, it is. It's like neurological development.

Well, it's been lovely chatting to you, Jessica. Are there any other questions before we finish off? No, just thank you for everything you're doing. I think the more information that's out there and I think this series with not real moms, more real moms is really nice because you can have something to relate to, which is going to be great.

Yeah, no, it really is. So we've got quite a few moms coming through now. I put a call out on Instagram.

So if anybody does want to be on the podcast with me, you basically get a free consultation because you can bring any questions you want. And last week we had some really lovely questions coming through about sleep regressions at seven months. So, yeah, it's always wonderful to chat to moms and kind of pick up on what's happening with them because it can be generalized to other babies.

So thank you for your time, Jessica. Yeah, thank you. Excellent.

Great to connect. Thanks, moms. And we will catch you again next week.

Thanks to everyone who joined us. We will see you the same time next week. Until then, download Parents Sense app and take the guesswork out of parenting.