

In General...

Here we are in the middle of August already, how did that happen? I know how July flew by for me since most of it was spent traveling, but where the heck has the beginning of August gone?

I am 30 weeks + a few days pregnant. I talked to the doctor yesterday and am most likely going to have the baby at 39 weeks (planned cesarean), so there is not too much time left of this pregnancy – for that, I am mostly glad! I cannot wait to meet little Luke! Plus I'm sick of the soreness, the nausea, the moodiness, and all that good stuff. I just hope that I turn back into a normal person again because right now it seems like an impossibility. I can't remember my life before I was pregnant – did I really have enough energy to function every day? Sure don't now, but most days, I can fake it but that is exhausting in itself.

I wrote a few posts ago about making important decisions and about doors of opportunity opening for us. For certain things, we are still praying, being patient, and waiting to see what God's plan is for us right now. In the meantime, we did reach one decision about a lifestyle change for our family, and we are very excited to get started. Close family already knows what this is about, but do I want to reveal it to others for the first time in a blog? I'm not sure... But either way, we are very excited about it, and it's been a lot of fun already to begin this journey. Just another thing to look forward to this fall!

Tonight is the last night of our Wednesday night Bible study, and it's been great to make new friends and to get to know these families. I am looking forward to having 3 (THREE!!) free Wednesday nights for our family once the class is over and before youth group starts again. And how is this for irony? I wrote the preceding paragraphs, saved it as a draft,

then did lunch with the kids before coming back to it. During lunch, I checked the mail and I found postcards notifying us of youth group leader training meetings on TWO of my THREE free Wednesdays. Sigh. I need to be happy with that one free evening, but my human nature disappoints me because I almost had 3 free Wednesdays instead of one... oh well, such is life. Wednesday nights are fun anyway; I just wish I had more energy to enjoy them.

My Monday morning Bible study is drawing to a close also – that one I will really miss. I've become close with the other ladies in my class, and it's been so great to get to know them and learn about the similarities and the differences in our lives and journeys in our relationships with Christ. I will even miss the 5 hours a week of homework – it was SO incredibly valuable and eye-opening for me to spend this time with God's word. If I weren't taking on so much this fall, I would definitely sign up for another one. Maybe in the spring or next summer...

Seen some movies lately, as usual – I think it's probably mine and Hubby's favorite thing to do together, snuggle and watch movies after long days of work and tending the kids. I had heard that the new Planet of the Apes movie was supposed to be good, so we saw that, but I was disappointed. It was okay, but I was hoping for less ape, more planet – meaning, the movie ended just as the apes were about to take over. I would have liked to see their rise to power as they actually take over the planet. Maybe that's going to be saved for the next movie? The movie was entertaining, but there was a little too much animal cruelty and not enough payoff – seeing the apes take over the planet – for having to watch all that animal cruelty. Of course the creatures were CGI so you know none of them were hurt during filming and it was just a movie, but that doesn't mean in my spare time I want to sit and watch that and think about what goes on in animal testing labs.

We haven't visited the Redbox in a while, mostly because we

had seen many of the movies they had (we watch a lot of movies!). But Hubby ventured out last night and picked out Cedar Rapids, a fun (a bit more vulgar than I usually like, but interesting just the same) movie about insurance salesmen starring Ed Helms (Andy Bernard from The Office; he's also in the Hangover movies). It was a different kind of movie, and we both enjoyed it.

That's about it for now... I just had the opportunity to sit and blog for awhile – I MADE the opportunity, actually – because I just HAD to today. I've had this awful headache that's been lodged behind my left eye for a few days now, and running around chasing kids again was just too much for today. And I do need to sit more. For someone in my condition, I really think I should be resting more, but the nature of the busyness in our household makes it an impossibility. I'm finding it quite a challenge to take good care of myself, finding time to eat right to take care of my anemia and gestational diabetes and all that stuff. It's just too hard to put myself first when I have 4 little ones to take care of and Hubby has his own full plate with work as well. I hate to complain about physical stuff, but I really need to feel better soon.

I Passed!!!

Yesterday I did something I've never done before – I passed a 3 hour glucose challenge! I haven't had a gestational diabetes-free pregnancy since my first-born 8 ½ years ago! It feels really good to know that I can eat whatever I want for the next few months without having to worry about pairing proteins with carbs and cutting out desserts; I can hardly believe it. I don't have to go and speak with the

endocrinologist or the dietician, and I won't be taking non-stress tests at the hospital. Most importantly, I won't have to inject my body with insulin – something with which my husband and I were not very comfortable anyway. And since gestational diabetes often leads to large babies, I am curious to see what this one will weigh. The previous 2 babies were both 8 lbs. 12 oz, and my first baby (no diabetes) was only 7 lbs. 2 oz. Of course, she was a little bit early and is still pretty small for her age to this day. But, I just wanted to share the news because I'm very excited that I have a few less things to worry about, and I know I had people waiting to hear the results of my test.

Hunger and Boredom

Took my 3-hour glucose “challenge” today, and since it was SO fun for me (sarcasm adundant), I thought I would spread some of the ‘cheer’ by giving you a run-down of what this medical test entails.

First, why do they call it a glucose challenge? To provide extra motivation, maybe? Whatever the reason, I think they should change the name because glucose challenge makes it sound like I was there to run a relay or something. But the glucose challenge is quite the opposite. It requires that you sit at the medical office for 3 hours and do nothing. Literally. Sure, you can read or sew or Sudoku, but you are not supposed to get out of your chair with the exception of donating a vial of blood every hour. The test is given to pregnant women to determine whether or not they have gestational diabetes, which is when the pregnancy hormones block the body's production of insulin, which will make blood sugar skyrocket and potentially lead to a large baby. Since

I've had the condition for 2 of my previous pregnancies, I just might be a glucose challenge expert by now. My husband wanted to know why couldn't I just skip the one hour test and go right for the 3 hour test since we both knew that I would fail it since I am craving sweets and I've failed my last two 1-hour tests. (MAJOR chocolate malt craving the other night, by the way. If I do have the diabetes, it will stink to have to fend off one of those cravings with sugar-free chocolate... somehow it's just not the same.) The Dr. wasn't down with skipping right to the 3 hour test though, so lucky me, I've had to do them both.

Sure enough, I failed my 1 hour, which is why I got to spend my whole day at the doctor's office waiting to get poked with a needle today. And that's not even the funnest part. They make you fast from 10pm the night before until whenever your test is over, which for me wasn't until 1:30 this afternoon! They were a little late on my last blood draw, and I was on the verge of wreaking havoc in the office when they finally called me in. Luckily, my daughter had gone to school with the nurse's daughter a few years ago, so she recognized me and noticed the desperate look in my eyes, otherwise I think they might have forgotten about me. One more minute, and I was going to carry out my plan to go to my car and scavenge for crumbs my kids left behind on the road trip to Illinois. Luckily, it didn't come to that, but asking a pregnant lady to go without food for over 12 hours is a pretty brave thing to do!

I forgot to mention that for 3 days prior to the test, they put you on a special diet. I was like, oh great, here we go, but when I got the diet paper home and looked at it, the diet actually turned out to be the best part! For 3 days, I was under *doctor's orders* to load up on carbs, eat anything I wanted, and to *make sure* that I ate dessert with both lunch and dinner. No problem, mission accomplished!

And a final note, before I take a nap, since they literally

drained the energy from my body today in 3 separate installments... they have a new flavor of the glucose drink you have to drink. It used to be just orange, which tasted like orange pop, but today I was offered a cola flavored one also. So I chose the new one because, what the heck, you only live once, and I've had the orange one more than a few times by now. Which brings me to a question I have: if there is 50g of dextrose in these little drinks, why don't they taste better? It's not like they taste bad (the orange ones anyway), but shouldn't something that is basically liquid sugar taste a little better? I can think of probably about 50 things that would taste much better and have lots of sugar in them. Why don't they let me binge on candy and desserts before the glucose test instead of downing that drink? And if I do have gestational diabetes, is it really the best thing for my body to be ingesting all this sugar just for them to test me? And what do they need a whole vial of blood for every hour? I am beginning to feel like someone's science project! I guess doctors know best, even though sometimes it's hard (downright impossible for people like my husband!) to put your trust in them. But back to my point... if you ever have to take this test, I would stay away from the cola flavored glucose drink. It's not very good, and every time I think about drinking it, I feel nauseous! It reminds me of the 'flat cola' remedy my mom recommended one time when I was sick as a kid. I felt like I was going to throw up, even though I hadn't, so she had heard somewhere that I should drink flat cola. We just happened to have some in the house, so I tried it, promptly vomited everything up, and couldn't look at cola for months. And I still remember it. Sorry Mom... that one just didn't work ☐

Veining Victory

All my life I've had to deal with a less than optimal anatomy. In Kindergarten, my teacher wrote on my report card, "lacks hand-eye coordination." Not *lacking in* hand-eye coordination, she definitely wrote LACKS – as if I didn't have any at all. My vision hasn't been the best and neither has my hearing for that matter; due to the multiple ear infections I suffered as a toddler. The LACK of hand-eye coordination followed me all throughout school. There were all those skill tests we would have to take every year in gym class... you know, the mile run, flexed arm hang, shuttle run, 50 yard dash, long jump (the long jump was only a clever name for when people like me tried to take that test and could barely get off the ground, much less produce a long jump), etc. The weeks we did those tests were the most dreaded weeks of the year for me. Not only would I look pretty stupid trying to do them, but I would always fail miserably. They actually based your grades for those tests upon your scores and not upon how hard you tried. Mine were always off the scale F's. Luckily, they weren't enough to bring my gym grade down too low because I was always a pretty good student and to have that ruined because I LACKED hand-eye coordination, now that just wouldn't be right.

Now, as an adult, it doesn't really matter how fast I can run back and forth between 2 lines on the floor while stopping to stoop and touch them. Not that I've tried, which only proves how unimportant something like that is... but it seems that all those years of falling physically behind my peers has been made up for me by a "gift" my adult body has bestowed upon me: huge, viable veins! Every time the lab people at the Dr.'s office have to draw my blood, they are **extremely** impressed by my veins. In fact, I am often the talk of the lab – *hey, Karen, come over here, look what I've got to work with!*

Today I had a student drawing my blood (oh, great, just what I

wanted to see, someone about to pierce my skin with a needle who is **in training to do so!** I realize they have to learn somewhere, but why do they have to learn on me?), and the nurse jokingly told her, wow, you could draw that one in the dark! Haha, hehe, but please, let's not try that!

Anyway, I don't mean to brag to anyone who is less endowed in the vein department, but it's just nice to finally get my due after falling so far behind physically in every other way for so long. And it may seem unimportant to you, but I make a lot of friends at the lab this way, and also, my veinly gifts are very useful in my life. Having had four pregnancies and 2 cases (hopefully only 2; I will find out soon if there will be 3) of gestational diabetes, that means there is lots of blood being drawn from me! I get poked and prodded so often that I'm starting to think that my veins are actually *fun* for the lab people to draw from... or maybe it was no coincidence that the student lab technician had me as a patient to draw from today – maybe they've secretly made me the lab student assignment for the hospital!