

Arainna's Story:

For Arainna, learning about her family health history was more than just a hobby, it saved her life.

It began in 2002 when Arainna's mother suffered a stroke at the age of 61. Her mother had shown symptoms of stroke including dizziness, slurred speech, confusion, and facial sagging. The stroke was caused by a heart defect and blood clotting disorder that can run in families, which together can be deadly.

Shortly after her mother's stroke, Arainna, her husband and eight-month-old daughter returned from London after visiting her parents. When they arrived home, Arainna began to feel dizzy. The next day she couldn't say words with the letter "S". Her jaw felt out of alignment. Then, at the grocery store, she couldn't sign her name on the credit card receipt. She remembered her mother's symptoms and panicked because she knew she had had a stroke. Arainna was twenty-four. Arainna immediately went to a doctor at a nearby clinic who dismissed the problem as jetlag. She insisted that with her recent family history of stroke, that something was wrong. Many tests later, Arainna learned she had suffered a stroke and had the same heart defect and blood clotting disorder as her mother. To make things even more complicated, Arainna learned to her surprise that she was expecting another child. Terrified and scared that she and her baby wouldn't survive, Arainna endured surgery to repair her heart.

Nine months later, Arainna gave birth to a beautiful and healthy baby girl, a true miracle baby.

Arainna recalls, "My mom's problem was a gift because they would have never looked for that in me. The only thing you have control over in your family health history is to empower yourself enough to be aware of what you're potentially at risk of so you can recognize the symptoms or prevent the disease from occurring."