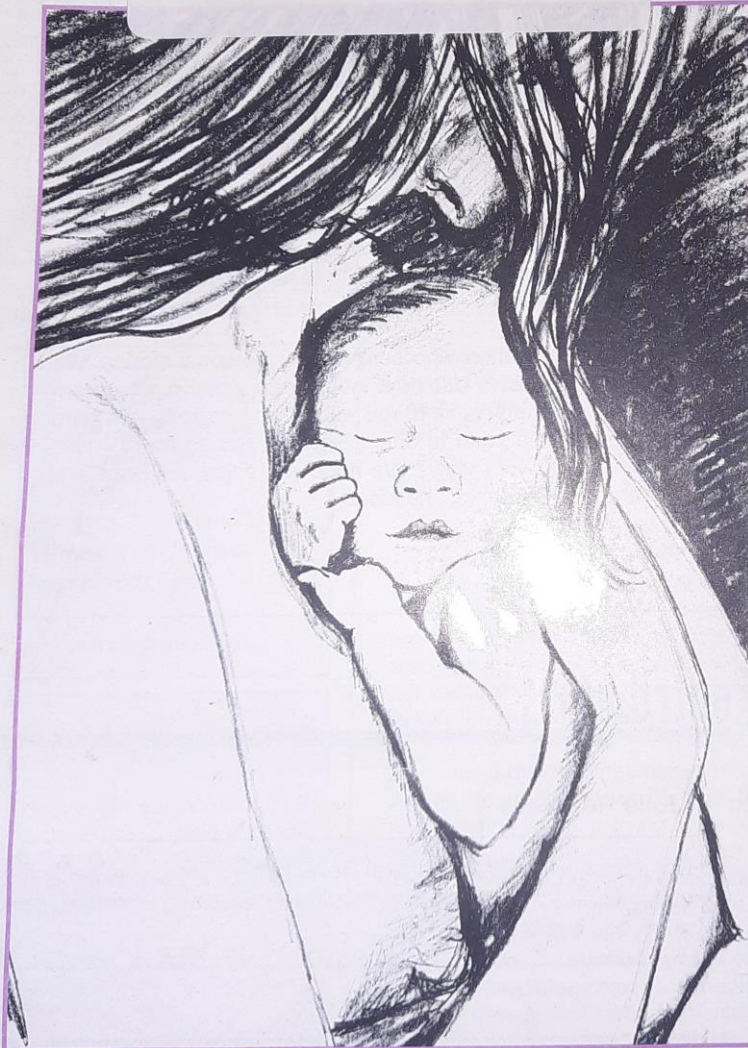


Positively Women

Pregnancy Diary of
Maline. ①

Newsletter



**From Here
To Maternity**

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4M Mentor Mothers

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My Pregnancy Journey Diary (From here to Maternity) - Angelina Namiba

This *Week by week Pregnancy Journey Diary* was initially/originally published in the Positively Women magazine March/April issue of 1999. The organisation Positively Women later changed name and is now known as [Positively UK](#). They continue to provide excellent support and services to people living with HIV.

From Here to Maternity – Part 1

The idea to share my experience of pregnancy with you all came to me when I was having a relaxing reflexology session at [Body & Soul](#) one sunny Friday morning. (Gail (the wonderful reflexologist), this is all down to you...)

Weeks 0-8

I had no idea that I was pregnant but even at the early stage, I could not stand some people. My boobs started getting bigger but I put it down to a bit of weight gain. I wasn't particularly bothered about it. Then, my face started getting spotty. I even went off my favourite pint of Guinness!

Week 9

I mentioned the above to a good friend whose answer to me was, *'you need to go and get yourself something from the chemist's!'* So I did. The test was positive. I was pleasantly surprised. I also made an appointment to see my consultant for a confirmatory test. I wasn't too convinced at this stage as I had some spotting which I assumed was my period.

The doctor confirmed the positive test and made an appointment for me to have a scan after I mentioned the spotting to him. I had a scan which showed that I was 9 and a half weeks pregnant! At this stage, it merely looked like a tadpole. Even after seeing the scan, I couldn't quite get my head around the idea.

I took a bus ride to think about it. I kept taking the scan photo out of my diary and having a look, then putting it back and thinking, then taking it out again...



Week 10-11

I went about life as usual. I carried the scan around with me wherever I went. Occasionally, I'd pull it out and steal a glance, just to remind myself.

Around about this time I started experiencing 'morning sickness', well in my case it was 'afternoon sickness'. I went off alcohol completely, which was a good thing as I have been known to put away quite a bit in my time!

Week 12-13

I had a lot of questions in my mind but still dared not ask anyone. I ventured into WH Smiths health section and got hold of a book that explained pregnancy, week by week.

My doctor and I had discussed the different options regarding reducing 'mother to baby transmission'¹. I made the decision early on that I would take AZT. I also decided to have a caesarean section and not breastfeed. To be honest, HIV was not that much of an issue for me at this point.

¹ The term we prefer to use now is vertical transmission as this removes the onus and responsibility of transmission solely from the mother. See also paper on The Language of HIV. <https://www.nhivna.org/file/5dcbdc83254e/BP-19-2.pdf>

I was more worried about other pregnancy things. I had read somewhere that the chances of any woman miscarrying early on were quite high and one needed to wait until at least 13 weeks before feeling any sense of confidence and telling the world. I have to admit though, that I had everything crossed. I tried not to get too excited, in order not to tempt fate. I did tell two close friends though; one who lives in Germany and who knew how much I wanted to have a baby. (She had two of her own). My other close friend lives here (she's the one who suggested I get the testing kit).

I also told two of my colleagues. One found out when we went to the Turkish Baths and I had to cry out as the rules recommended that people who were pregnant or who had a skin disease should not use the baths. I quite obviously did not have a skin disease, so I came clean to her. We went swimming instead. I showed the scan to my other colleague who promptly decided she was going to be Godmother. I said yes as I thought she will make a great Godmother.

Week 14

I started to relax a bit, but not too much. (Optimistic soul that I am!) I told my Line Manager who had also not long ago come back from Maternity Leave. I felt she'd understand. She was pleased for me. I still could not get myself to get really excited at this point!

Week 15

I made a 'booking appointment' at the hospital. I was asked if I wanted to do an [amniocentesis](#) (a test that is done to determine whether the foetus has Down's syndrome). I said I would think about it but in the end I declined. I felt I would not be able to cope with the worry of waiting for the test results. As it turned out, I was going to have to go through a lot of waiting for test results...

Week 16

I went for my 'booking appointment'. The midwife was very friendly. I also had another scan. The legs hands etc were all so much clearer! It was amazing. Finally, I bought a couple of pregnancy magazines from Tesco's. I also went back to WH Smiths and bought a Pregnancy and Birth Question and Answer book. I felt sure if I didn't buy my own copy I'd be thrown out of the store, as I'd gotten into the habit of going in there every week and reading the Pregnancy week by week book that I had discovered earlier on.

Week 17-19

My clothes started getting really tight by now! My bras definitely did not fit. I have to say, though, that I loved my new big boobs! I bought a new bra and my friend lent me three huge ones. When I say huge, I mean as huge as in, one cup fits over her two-year-old daughter's head! She assured me they would fit.

Week 20



My 20-week scan had to be postponed to the following week as the person who does them was on holiday. I definitely had a bump now! My cousin told me about a close family friend who had a miscarriage at 22 weeks. This was really sad and upsetting and I really felt for her. It also made me anxious.

Week 21

I went for the scan and was able to see the baby's features more clearly. This was my final chance to find out their sex. This would be my last scan and they would only do another one if it was very necessary. The lady doing the scan asked me if I wanted to find out the sex, but I chickened out. I think I like the element of surprise. The baby started kicking properly. What an experience!