

[Onscreen] Hear Her: Desiree and Kirsten's Story. DDHHS and CDC logo.

[Music]

Desiree: I am Desiree. I am from a small ski town in Northern Utah. I have three kids, married the boy next door, and decided to stay local.

Kirsten: I'm Kirsten. I also have three kids. I'm her younger sister. And I now live in Boise, Idaho.

Desiree: So, we were really excited when my daughter was born, hearing them say, "Oh, it's a girl." Um, and I remember everyone's taking turns holding her, and my doctor said to me, "Hey, Des, we have a problem. Your placenta is not coming out." Um, and he said, "I'm going to have to go in and get it."

My past two pregnancies before this delivery, um, I had healed, bounced back pretty quickly as far as feeling good. After this delivery, I was struggling with bleeding. And I didn't want to bring up that I was bleeding with everybody. It just felt uncomfortable for me. So, I finally confided in my sister and said, "Hey, is this normal? Did you have this?" Because I felt safe bugging her about it.

Kirsten: And I just was like, "I, I don't know these things. Just go check it out." You never know. Right? What's the worst that could happen?

Desiree: I went into his office that afternoon, and he found a silver dollar-sized piece of retained placenta. And he said, "We need to do a procedure to take that out in order for you to get better." When I had that procedure done, I began to hemorrhage. I was passing very large clots.

Then I went home on oral medication in order to control the bleeding. And we thought, "That's it. I'm good." Um, and then a week to the day, I began to have very heavy, gushing blood. And then I went back in for help.

[Onscreen text] Postpartum hemorrhage (heavy bleeding) can be a serious pregnancy complication.

Desiree: In the doctor's office, that's when like the dam broke. I mean, it just, my doctor described it as "a garden hose turned on full blast." Um, I began to lose consciousness very quickly. I was rushed to the ER.

At that point a decision was made that a hysterectomy was the only way to save my life, because I had already lost so much blood. They rushed me into the OR, and my husband said, "I remember watching you being wheeled down the hallway and thinking, I might not see her again." Um, thankfully, I woke up.

[Onscreen text] Getting care right away can save a life.

Desiree: I don't think I would've gone in had she not told me to go. I didn't want to waste anybody's time. I felt like I was being dramatic, and I didn't want to, it's embarrassing. I didn't want to go in and say, "I have this problem."

Kirsten: So glad you did. Because it saved your life.

Desiree: As women, we're smart. We are intelligent. We're powerful. We know when things aren't right. And we know our bodies better than anybody else... And if it's not right, go in.

I was lucky. I have an OB who listened. He paid attention when I said, "Something isn't right."

[Onscreen text] Be the support she needs.

Kirsten: I think people just forget to look at the mom and they focus so much on the baby, as they should. But moms they need somebody there, just watching out for them.

Desiree: And I, I know I recovered quickly because of the support that I had. But I will forever be grateful for everyone who rushed in, in whatever capacity that looked like.

Kirsten: I would encourage other support people to be that look-out.

Kirsten: Be the support she needs.

Desiree: Hear Her...It could save a life.

[Onscreen text] Hear Her. Learn more at [cdc.gov/hearher](https://cdc.gov/hearher). DDHHS and CDC logo.