

◀ afraid the tests have shown your baby has Down's syndrome."

Tim and I looked at each other in total disbelief. How could this be happening? And then to our utter amazement the doctor added, "You should think about a termination." As he outlined the reasons why, our shock turned to outrage. Our son was fully formed and had a name – how could he suggest such a thing?

He told us we'd have a baby with 'mental retardation' and gave us a bleak picture of what lay ahead if we kept him: a potentially short life riddled with health problems. Struggling to speak, I croaked out that his suggestion seemed like murder. Tim squeezed my hand and forcefully agreed.

Back at home we trawled the internet for information. The Down's

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Syndrome Association made it clear how rewarding it can be to have children with the condition, and that they often have long and fulfilling lives. We vowed to love our baby whatever happened.

When Harrison was born, in May 2004, I didn't see a Down's child; just my beautiful son. Harrison is a healthy, happy, loving child and the thought that a doctor advised me to kill him shakes me to the core. I feel so sad that it's still acceptable to see Down's as a reason to have a termination.

There'll always be challenges. Harrison takes longer to learn things – for instance, he isn't walking yet – and there are constant development checks with specialists. However, he is the most adorable child and when he snuggles up to me or flashes me his warm, loving smile, I know that it's all been worthwhile.



LEILA WILCOX, 26, is managing director of a children's toiletries company. She's single and lives in Oxford with three-year-old Troy

When the blue line emerged on the pregnancy test I couldn't believe it. Part of me wanted to scream from the rooftops, "I'm going to be a mum!" But the rest of me shook with fear at the fact I was jobless and pregnant by a man I barely knew.

A few months before I'd given up a steady job in sales to pursue an acting career. I was living at home, so I hadn't worried too much about not having a regular income. What I hadn't expected was to meet Paul. He was tall with blond, curly hair, typical surfer looks and

an infectious sense of humour. Although he was 14 years older than me, within a few weeks we started seeing each other. One night, three months after we'd met, we had a silly conversation about becoming parents. In a completely impulsive gesture I told Paul I was going to stop taking the Pill. I didn't really believe I could get pregnant as I'd always had irregular periods. But ten days later I felt horribly sick and a test revealed I was having a baby.

I immediately confided in my close friend, Sarah*, who was a single mum to an 18-month-old ▶