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When I was a teenager, to be honest I didn't actually think I could get pregnant. I had very heavy and irregular periods from quite a young age, so I just kind of presumed I wasn't fertile. Eventually, I did go to the doctor and the doctor gave me the pill to kind of try and help with that, and it was just after that time when I met my first boyfriend. So I was already on the pill for my periods, at that point they also became a contraceptive. And we were together for three years. I hit 19 and that was when I discovered that I was pregnant. And I was really excited, if I'm honest, because like I said I'd always thought it would never happen, and the thought that suddenly there was an opportunity for me to have a child so I knew immediately that it wasn't something I was going to jeopardise. He didn't feel the same way and so he left. But I'd made up my mind by that point, I was going to have her and I was really excited about it. But it was difficult.

After having her I got postnatal depression. So looking after a baby at the end of a relationship and being on your own and suffering from depression, it was very difficult. Things got easier as time went by, of course. I met Mike, my current partner. Emmie was healthy. And I was on the pill again, but it didn't take long for me to decide that actually I didn't really trust it after the results of the last time I'd taken it. So I looked around at some different options. One of my friends recommended that I look at the IUD, the coil, and actually it seemed like the best long-term solution. After kind of researching it and stuff I decided that I wanted the copper coil without the hormones because that meant I would still have my periods and being in a relationship I wanted to be sure that I wasn't, you know, that I was keeping check and that I wasn't going to get pregnant again.

I booked myself in at the GP, but it was a lot more complicated than I thought it was going to be. To begin with before you can have it fitted you have to have your swabs done to make sure that everything's healthy and that it's all kind of clear to go. So I had that done and then I got booked in for the fitting. Now the first appointment was cancelled. They actually didn't give me a reason; they just called me to cancel it. The next time, the day beforehand, I get a phone call from the GP saying that the doctor is actually sick and that they had to reschedule again. The week following I went in for my appointment and as part of kind of the routine they do a pregnancy test. And so I took that and I was pregnant again.

As a young mother, bringing up a small child, day to day it's amazing you remember where you put your keys. There are going to be times if you're on the pill that you forget to take it or that you might take it late. So I might have been at fault. But I was so frustrated because we had been trying and trying to get me in for this appointment to have the IUD fitted and we'd been cancelled on – I just couldn't understand why it was so difficult to get the thing sorted.

So we sat up pretty much all of that night talking about it and talking about how realistic it was that we'd be able to support a third child, because Mike, he has a five-year-old who comes to us on the weekends. So we were already supporting two children and the more we talked about it the more we realised that actually financially we weren't stable enough. And, you know, mentally and emotionally we weren't ready for that added responsibility. So in the end we decided the best thing to do was to have a look at having an abortion.

I thought it was going to be a very complicated and very difficult process. And actually in the end it was a lot easier than I thought it would be. The staff at the clinic were very, very helpful. They kind of talked us through the different options we had. There were two types of abortion that they offered me at the time. The first one was by pill. You have to take a pill one day and then you go back, I don't know, 24 hours later for another one, and looking after two kids that wasn't really

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an option for me so we went for the second one which was surgical removal. And one of the benefits of that was that they could fit the IUD at the same time. And so I think that was kind of automatically the better idea.

So we ended up going for that. And, again, the staff were really helpful. They were very supportive. I did think we were going to come up against a lot of negativity that we were kind of irresponsible or immature because we were so young but actually everyone was really helpful and Mike was brilliant. And that was so important for me. It really felt like a decision that the two of us had made because he was there and he was supporting me through the whole thing. It was a difficult decision and it took a while for us to come to terms with it. You do feel guilty and we want so much to be able to provide for our children and give them the things that they need. In the end I think it was better for us that we made that call, we made that tough decision, and if we had to do it again I think we would.

END OF RECORDING

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