



27 SEP, 2019

## Thriving after preemie scare

Geelong Indy, Geelong

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**By Natalee Kerr**

Bell Post Hill's Emily Connell is a lively and healthy five-year-old with "bundles of energy".

But her entry into the world was anything but easy at 27 weeks premature and weighing only 659 grams.

Emily spent her first 98 days in hospital, an emotional "roller coaster" for mum Amanda.

"She had one or two nurses constantly monitoring her, there were multiple cords attached to her – she couldn't breathe on her own because she was so small," Amanda said.

"Leaving her at the end of the day was the hardest thing I've ever had to do."

The beginning of Amanda's pregnancy was "completely normal" before a "lingering cold" at the 26-week mark.

Amanda saw her GP when she felt something was wrong.

"I was initially told that it was just a cold and that relaxing should get rid of it," she said.

But blood pressure and urine tests found she had pre-eclampsia – a potentially dangerous pregnancy complication.

"My GP turned around and said to me 'if you don't get to the hospital straight away, I'm calling the ambulance'," she said.

Amanda immediately went to University Hospital Geelong and paramedics rushed her to the Royal Women's for an early delivery.

"It was a lot more severe than I first thought... my husband was told that I could lose my life and my daughter could lose hers too," she said.

Following Emily's birth, Amanda discovered premature birth help group Life's Little Treasures Foundation.

The foundation provided fact sheets, helped her decipher complex medical language and connected her with others going through the same journey.

"I honestly don't know how we would've coped without them," Amanda said.

Now the mother-of-two is hoping to raise \$1000 for the charity through her fourth Walk for Prems fundraiser in Melbourne on 27 October.

Through the walk Amanda hoped to repay a charity that meant "the world" to her.

"I just want to make sure that others have the same support when they are thrust into the scary and unknown world of (premature birth)," she said.

To support Amanda in Walk for Prems visit [www.facebook.com/teampremmieemmie](http://www.facebook.com/teampremmieemmie).



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PREMMIE EMMIE: Emily, 5, with mum Amanda Connell. 198303

Picture: REBECCA HOSKING