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Haywards Heath campaigner is Tesco Mum of the Year 2014



A mother, who since the death of her son has campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness and improve medical practice around Group B Strep infection in the UK, has been announced as a Tesco Mum of the Year Awards winner.

Jane Plumb, 55, of Haywards Heath, West Sussex will be presented with her award in a star-studded ceremony at London's iconic hotel, The Savoy, on Sunday March 23.

Jane's story was chosen from amongst thousands of nominations sent in from all over the UK.

In 1996, Jane founded a charity called Group B Strep Support (GBSS), just four months after her son, Theo, died from the infection.

Haywards Heath campaigner is Tesco Mum of the Year 2014 - West S... <http://www.westsussextoday.co.uk/news/county-news/latest-news/ha...>

Testing for Group B Strep isn't available as part of routine ante-natal care in the UK.

Group B Strep affects more children in the UK than Spina Bifida and yet few pregnant women have even heard of it.

Jane had a normal pregnancy, but Theo was born very prematurely.

Unfortunately Theo didn't respond well once he had been delivered at the Princess Royal, in Haywards Heath, so he was transferred to the Royal Sussex, the Trevor Mann Baby Unit, but shortly after passed away.

Jane was later informed that his death had been caused by Group B Strep infection, which women can pass on to their babies around birth.

Jane said: "We had so many questions, like whether I could have another baby, but there was so little information about Group B Strep for parents then. There was very little information for [health professionals](#) in the UK either."

Since her son's death in 1996, Jane has campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness and improve medical practice around Group B Strep in the UK.

Jane discovered that Group B Strep is present without any symptoms and without it causing any harm in up to 30% of adults who carry it, but if it is present a woman gives birth, it can cause serious infections such as septicaemia, pneumonia and meningitis in the newborn.

Every year in the UK around 500 babies become ill because of the infection and around 50 of them will die.

Of the rest, most make a good recovery, but some are left with lasting effects of the infection.

Jane got in touch with microbiologist, Robert Feldman, who was researching Group B Strep prevention, and started her campaign for more information for parents and [health professionals](#).

He, with other medical experts, helped her set up her charity. She received charity status on 20th September, which was six months to the day that Theo had died.

Over the past 17 years, Jane has dedicated her life to GBSS, working with both health professionals and parents to raise awareness and provide support and information on GBS, and campaigning for routine information provision and testing here in the UK.

The test doesn't identify which babies will definitely develop Group Strep B infection, but it can show those who are at higher risk so their mothers can be offered antibiotics in labour to reduce that risk.

The charity's efforts contributed to the first national guidelines being published on Group Strep B in 2003, a major achievement given that in 1996, when the charity was founded, Group B Strep wasn't on the agenda. In 2003, NICE's Antenatal Care guidelines included a section on Group B Strep and The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists produced their first ever Group B Strep guideline.

Managing to balance her campaigning with motherhood, Jane, who is also mum to Oliver (21) and Camilla (15), regularly speaks at conferences to raise further awareness, on behalf of the charity and in 2012 she was given an MBE by Prince Charles. Jane added: "We get families saying, actually the information we got from you gave us the courage and helped us make the decision to have another baby."

Jane's story touched the hearts of the Tesco Mum of the Year Awards judging panel, including radio DJ Sara Cox, TV presenter Gabby Logan and Olympic gold medallist and TV personality Denise Lewis.

2014 is the ninth year of the Tesco Mum of the Year Awards.

The glamorous red carpet ceremony, which attracts a host of celebrity guests, will celebrate inspirational mums from all over the UK, who have made a difference to the lives of others.

Jane will also be treated to a full makeover and her own Tesco Living magazine photo shoot, before being presented with her award in front of friends, family and celebrity guests.

Debbie Chernin, Tesco Mum of the Year Manager, said: "We are extremely proud to be holding the Tesco Mum of the Year Awards for the ninth year.

It is a privilege to be able to recognise the achievements of an amazing woman and mum like Jane. Her determination to help raise awareness for Group B Strep, and support others, is truly inspirational."

For more information on the Tesco Mum of the Year Awards, please visit <http://www.tesco.com/living> | www.tesco.com/living (and click on the Mum of the Year section).

Keep up to date with all the news from the awards on Twitter @TescoLiving #MumoftheYear

For more information about Group B Strep, visit www.gbss.org.uk.