

MDA Paramedic Guides Woman's Home Birth to Twins

Magen David Adom's dedication to saving lives in Israel includes helping new lives begin.

An Israeli woman expecting twins, Meital Shiri, was home alone except for her 9-year-old son when she began experiencing labor pains that told her she did not have time to get to the hospital. Even though she was only 34 weeks along, she knew "it was time." Despite the pain she felt as she lay on the couch and her growing sense of panic as the first twin arrived, Shiri had the presence of mind to call the one organization she knew would immediately come to her aid: Magen David Adom.

Maya Aloni, the MDA paramedic and dispatcher who took Shiri's call, responded immediately, telling Shiri how to handle the newborn and guiding her through the initial phases of delivering the second child while simultaneously rushing an ambulance with MDA paramedics to Shiri's home.

During the hectic and dramatic conversation—which, like all emergency calls, was recorded—Aloni directed Shiri, encouraging her and providing emotional support. Within minutes, Shiri's husband, Ilan, arrived home, and Aloni gave him instructions as well.

Very shortly after that, the MDA paramedics arrived and delivered the second baby, after which they immediately took the mother and newborns to the hospital, where the preemie twins were put in incubators.

For Aloni, 25, the training and experience she has gained since joining MDA as a 15-year-old volunteer enabled her to remain calm and focus on helping the mother in distress. "In MDA, they teach us to function coolly and professionally. My

role was to keep the mother calm, reassure her, and be supportive until the ambulance arrived,” Aloni said.

The scene was so dramatic that the emergency call and interviews with Aloni and Shiri were recently featured on Israeli TV news.

Handling emergencies is one of the primary activities of MDA, Israel’s official ambulance service, blood services and disaster rescue agency. It’s fair to say Shiri received the full benefit of all MDA’s extensive training programs, from dispatchers who are fully qualified as paramedics for such situations to ambulance-based EMTs who have experience with everything from delivering babies to handling multi-casualty terrorist and rocket attacks.

The happy outcome in this story is that Shiri’s family can celebrate the addition of two new—and healthy—lives. Shiri said afterward that the whole experience seemed “like a dream—a good dream.”

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