

Twins. Twins?! For Brittany, this revelation should have brought with it a sense of expectation and joy. Instead it was followed by an overwhelming sense of despair. Brittany was informed that while she was carrying twins, there were severe complications that would put her life, and the lives of her unborn children, at risk.

At her 10-week ultrasound, Brittany was diagnosed with Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS), an exceedingly rare and potentially lethal condition that can occur in identical twins. Abnormal blood vessels in the shared placenta had caused their umbilical cords to fuse together. Because of these shared connections, one baby (Lukas) was getting an overabundance of nutrients while the other baby (Liam) was being deprived of what he needed to grow. Not only was this potentially fatal for the twins, but it put Brittany's life in jeopardy as well. Doctors urged her to have an abortion. When she refused, Brittany was placed on immediate bed rest for the duration of her pregnancy.



Following Brittany's 23-week ultrasound, doctors delivered more bad news regarding Liam. His arms were contracted, there were problems with his heart and he had Gastroschisis, a rare birth defect of the abdominal wall in which the baby's intestines stick outside of their body. The news was devastating to Brittany. However, she never lost faith that Liam would be a fighter and could somehow overcome this.

Over the next few months, Brittany went into labor multiple times. Each time the doctors were able to stop it. However, at 31 weeks, they allowed the delivery to continue because there was concern that Lukas was receiving too much fluid and was in jeopardy of rupturing. Lukas was born not breathing with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck and had to be resuscitated. Miraculously, despite being without oxygen during the delivery, Lukas did not suffer a traumatic brain injury or sustain any damage or negative repercussions from the TTTS. When Liam was born, he was immediately rushed into surgery in hopes of resolving his Gastroschisis.

Brittany spent the next three months in the NICU with both boys. Liam was ultimately diagnosed with a condition called Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita (AMC), a rare neuromuscular condition that causes many joints to be stiff and crooked at birth. Doctors told Brittany that Liam would never use his arms... they would be completely useless. He would need to learn to do everything with his legs and feet. She was told Liam would spend his entire life enduring painful therapies that would do nothing for him and give him little to no improvement in his arms.

While in the NICU, Liam was also diagnosed with a Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA), an unclosed hole in his aorta. Before birth, the two major arteries—the aorta and the pulmonary artery—are connected by a blood vessel called the ductus arteriosus. This vessel is an essential part of fetal blood circulation. After birth, this vessel is supposed to close as part of the normal changes occurring in the baby's circulation. In some babies, however, it remains open allowing oxygen-rich blood from the aorta to mix with oxygen-poor blood from the pulmonary artery. This can put strain on the heart and increase blood pressure in the lung arteries.

When Liam was 4 months old doctors informed Brittany that he would need surgery to repair the hole in his heart. Liam's lungs were not functioning properly because there was not enough oxygenated blood coming from his heart. That very night Brittany was up late watching television when she saw a commercial for Sara's Garden that brought her to tears. Liam's surgery was only a month away. Could this possibly help in time and prevent surgery? The next morning, she called her doctors and told them she wanted Liam to receive Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Conductive Education. Even though they told her that it was a complete waste of time and money, Brittany knew in her heart this was something she needed to do for Liam.

The first 4 months of Liam's life were a struggle for survival. He was far behind in many developmental milestones. He was also very lethargic and apathetic towards any activity. His arms and shoulders hung limp at his sides and did absolutely nothing. Soon after starting HBOT and CE, his personality finally began to emerge. He was no longer sleeping all the time. He began playing... and smiling. The joint flexion in his arms began improving dramatically.

Following Liam's initial round of HBOT, Brittany took him to the doctor for his scheduled well check in preparation for surgery. What was supposed to be a simple pre-surgical meeting turned into over 4 hours of testing. Specialist after specialist was called in to test and retest Liam. Something was different and no one believed what was being seen. By the time they left, the doctors had cancelled Liam's surgery and ordered reductions in his oxygen and heart medicines. The cardiologist that had told Brittany that HBOT would be a waste of money and that surgery was his only hope was now speechless after the echo and ultrasound showed an amazing transformation: His heart was contracting normally, the murmur was virtually undetectable and the hole in heart was closing!

Liam is continuing to make progress and is beginning to meet his developmental goals and milestones. Doctors have said that Liam's hands and fingers are now phenomenal. While his arms are still affected by his Arthrogryposis, Liam is now able to use them. He feeds himself. He grabs things off of tables. Most importantly to Brittany, he keeps pace with his brother and other kids that he plays with at church.

Thanks to Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy and Conductive Education services at Sara's Garden, Liam is a happy little boy who is defeating all of the odds that had been put against him. He is completely off all of his heart medications. Brittany knows that miracles do happen... and sometimes they come in pairs. She is confident that HBOT and CE have given Liam a chance at a much higher functioning life. No matter what you've been told, there is hope... and Sara's Garden can help you find it.



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