

Betty's story



In 2016 Darren and Leann gave birth to a little girl who they named Betty. Everything seemed to be ok, but as time went on, they noticed her facial features were changing, but were reassured by the doctor that everything was fine.

A few months later they went to the health visitor, who noticed there is a problem. After being examined by the GP, he reported that the condition would finally correct itself as she got older, and he could see no issues. As Betty began to grow and got a little older, the parents noticed the point on her forehead had become more prominent, and her eyes even more sunken.

One weekend, Betty became ill with a viral infection, and upon a visit to the local walk-in centre, was referred to the Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Whilst at the hospital waiting, a young doctor walked by and noticed that Betty had what she thought to be a very rare condition. While Betty was being examined, the doctor told them a story of her mother being the consultant in the craniofacial department of the hospital, and asked if the family could attend an appointment. It was then when Betty was diagnosed with Trigenocephaly, a congenital condition of premature fusion of the metopic suture, leading to a triangular shaped forehead. The merging of the two frontal bones leads to transverse growth restriction and parallel growth expansion. This means the skull is fused together, and therefore not allowing for the brain to grow.

This meant the family had to go every few months for examinations, 3D skull pictures and MRI scans. They had to attend numerous appointments at Alder Hey Children's Hospital so the doctors/consultants could keep track of the condition and the shape of her forehead and skull.

Betty had a major surgery on the February 19th 2018, brought forward from April as an emergency. This was due to the fact that Betty's brain was pushing on her skull, causing nose bleeds and pressure.

On the morning of Sunday 18th February they had to take their precious little girl into hospital, where they carried out several tests and prepared her for the Monday; Betty had to have 2 microbial baths due to the nature of the intrusive surgery.

The operation involved removal of the skin covering her face, removing part of the front skull and rebuilding the forehead. She spent a total of 11 hours in theatre. Betty was then transferred the ICU Ward where she stayed for a couple of days, so she could be closely monitored.

Betty's recovery was remarkable and she experienced no discomfort apart from not being able to open her eyes for a full 4 days. On the Friday, Darren and Leann were told they could take their little girl home, which was impossible to believe, considering they had been told she could be in for around 17 days after the operation. The family could not fault the dedication, support and care that Betty received whilst in hospital.



David Simms went to visit Darren and his family to take flowers and a cuddly teddy, a small gesture from Axis, and he was totally amazed to see Betty after 10 days, running around causing trouble as little ones do.

"Firstly, I can't believe the support and kindness shown by yourselves at Axis towards myself and my family, regarding my daughter's operation.

I am speechless as David Simms (my gaffa) has just called to see my family, bringing with him flowers for my partner, and a Teddy bear for my baby daughter Betty. My partner and I just can't believe it. I have never had any sort of support like this before and I can't show you how much we really appreciate it. It has been a really

hard few months leading up to today. My partner and I have had numerous hospital visits, and test appointments over my daughter Betty and her needing major surgery on her skull to fix a very rare condition. My baby daughter Betty has now had her operation and is on the road to a text book recovery. It's been 2 weeks now since she had an 11 hour operation and it's been hard but she is doing really well and recovering amazingly. THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH."



Darren and Leann with their daughter, after the operation

Darren Whittingham, Project Manager at Axis Cleaning and Support Services