

The Bandera PROPHET

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Life after the NICU

Child born 16 weeks premature finally goes home

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Little Maximus Decimus just celebrated his first Easter, and is fast approaching his birthday - an amazing milestone in his young life after a traumatic beginning.

Weighing only 15 ounces at birth, Maximus has already dealt with a lifetime of medical problems. Born 16 weeks early on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, he was delivered prematurely because of problems with the placenta.

“The ultrasound showed the blood flow to my son from the placenta through the cord was bottoming out. The specialist told me the best decision would be to take little Maximus out. There was no benefit in keeping him in,” his mother Jamie Diaz said.

Born during the pandemic, Diaz and her husband Alex had to alternate visits, while sharing shifts at their Lakehills home with two older children, then 12-year-old Alexander and 5-year-old Annabelle.

Maximus was in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) for 150 days.

“Life after the NICU has been crazy. I feel like that is the understatement of the century,” Diaz said.

Maximus first came home Nov. 13, but complications with a double hernia repair sent him back to the hospital for another week.

“He had multiple tests done and a hernia re-repair. Life after the readmission was great. Busy but great,” Diaz said. “Since the readmission, Maximus has been diagnosed with many things. His list of medical issues grows every time we turn around.”

On Jan. 20, the baby underwent his third surgery to help prevent him from aspirating his milk.

“The surgery went great Or so we thought. We were lucky to get readmitted to the NICU. Thank God for his NICU time and their thoroughness. His neonatologist ordered an xray just to check everything out and they found a foreign body object was left inside Maximus’s stomach. After multiple checks of the bedding, the diaper, the mattress it was confirmed a needle had been left inside. It was determined that night that he would go back into surgery the next morning to retrieve the needle. He was kept heavily sedated that night and into the morning. They retrieved the needle and no damage was apparent at the time. Maximus spent an additional seven days in the NICU.”

His medical conditions include prematurity, Chronic Lung Disease, hyperthyroidism, Atrial Septal Defect, ROP (Retinopathy of Prematurity) with Plus Disease, obstructive sleep apnea, central sleep apnea, Complex Dumping Syndrome, hyperglycemia, hypoglycemia, damage to the vagus nerve, damage to the stomach pace maker and Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease.

Medication he takes to help calm his stomach muscles also makes him weak, so he has to work extra hard on his physical development.

“He works with a physical and occupational therapist outpatient and at home,” Diaz said. “Maximus is extremely behind developmentally, but he has slowly started to do little things like roll to his side, reach for overhead toys and start cooing.”

This month, they will journey to Houston to the Texas Children's Hospital in April for a second opinion on his GI issues.

“We need to know for 100 percent that these issues are real and that medication is the best course of action. We also need to know what life will look like in the future for Maximus,” Diaz said. “Despite all this Maximus is the happiest baby I’ve ever met. Everyone who meets Maximus comments how happy he is. He wants for nothing even if it's just cuddles. He is adored by many people but especially by me, dad, brother and sister. Maximus continues to be a warrior each and every day. He is truly an amazing little guy.”

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