

# CASSIES WARRIORS FAMILY TEAM

My daughter, Cassandra Molly, was born at 32 weeks, weighing 4lb 5oz, 17.5 inches long. She arrived after an emergency c-section after my third big bleed. I had placenta previa and vasa previa and had been on bedrest in the hospital prior to her birth. My pregnancy was extremely high risk as I could bleed at any moment, resulting in a hospital stay. I had a big bleed at exactly 31 weeks in the middle of the night at home, leading to a 17 day hospital stay

After Cassie was born, I didn't meet her for 16 long hours. All I saw were pictures from my husband. The pictures were terrifying. My blood pressure was too high prohibiting me to sit up or get out of bed. Seeing her for the first time was a mix of happy and scared emotions. She was so tiny. I couldn't even see her face. She was covered in tubes and wires all over her body.

On day 3, she needed a chest tube put into her right lung to get extra air out. She was getting blood taken multiple times a day to check for infections. She also had an ultrasound done on her brain to make sure the extra air was not causing any brain damage (thankfully, it didn't). Things seemed to be going downhill quickly.

On day 4, she stopped breathing and needed to be intubated. This day forever changed my life. She went from being given 20 breaths per minute to 380 breaths per minute in a short amount of time. The doctor told us that her breathing habits were like a 28 week baby, not a 32 week old baby which she was. We had a painful conversation with the doctor about if she was going to make it or not, which was the most terrifying conversation I have ever had with someone. The doctor tried to keep us calm, but really didn't have an answer to give us. It was all up to what Cassie's little body could handle.

After 3 days on the ventilator, she was able to come off of it. We were finally able to hold her when she was 6 days old. Things were looking up.

## 2021 PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH



The next 2 weeks were focused on getting Cassie to drink from a bottle. This sounds much easier than it was. She had a very difficult time with feedings. She also had bad reflux and choked very easily (still does), so feedings were pretty scary for a while. We were taught different positions to feed her in to help her. This was all so new to us. Eventually, she was taking enough milk to come home after 20 days in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Cassie is now a happy, healthy & thriving 2 year old who brings a ray of sunshine everywhere she goes. She is the most determined baby and never gives up. We've been calling her a warrior since the day she was born and we always will. She absolutely lives up to being called a warrior! She is the inspiration behind my Instagram page, NICU Warriors.

I share her story to raise awareness. I share her story to prove that no one is alone in their NICU journey. I share her story to connect with other NICU parents. I share her story because I am a proud mama. I share her story because she has changed my life in more ways than she will ever know.