

30 Days/30 Stories®

Jonah

Diagnosed in 2018 with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia at the age of 2

I knew something was wrong. As a parent, sometimes you just… know. But how wrong things were for our little Jonah turned into a worst nightmare. I have been asked, "How did you know?" or "What made you decide to take him to the doctor?"

Jonah didn't have a high fever, infection, or something profoundly obvious. He just wasn't himself. If I were to show you a picture of tired little 2-year-old Jonah, you might assume, like I did, that he just needed a nap. He played too much today. He was being a typical picky eater. Or that his personality was developing towards a quiet, thoughtful boy.

Nope.

It started as a normal summer day in 2018, we took a "non-worried" trip to the pediatrician, got a script for a blood draw, and then, our world was changed with a rush to the ER at 10pm. Jonah's hemoglobin was at 2 - a dangerously low level. Platelets, the cells that heal cuts, were virtually non-existent. Now all his random bruises, and 5-hour naps started to make sense to me.

Jonah was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL for short). My glorious pint-sized kid, who snuggles next to me every morning was very sick. That first night in the hospital, he had multiple blood and platelet transfusions. And the chemo started right away.

The doctors gave him a good prognosis, he was the right age for a successful recovery and we caught it "early". However, it was still a scary and grueling fight to get to remission. The cancer cells didn't respond as quickly as they should have, so Jonah was placed in a High-Risk category. A few of the "lowlights" include: multiple scheduled and unscheduled hospital stays; a severe infection that has left scars on his legs; months of physical therapy to help him walk without tip-toeing; and Jonah begging and screaming to not go to the "hopital".

There are also highlights! Jonah would endlessly play trains and toys with the volunteers at the clinic. The child life specialist was called Dr. Fun until he could remember her name. He flirted with the nurses on the pediatric floor at LVH - perhaps he thought they wouldn't make him take the medication if he was charming. And in December 2018, in between treatment weekends, he was the cutest and baldest ring bearer in town! I hope these are the memories he keeps as he grows.

As of April 2019, Jonah is in remission, but his journey is not over. There is still 2+ years of maintenance treatment and monitoring. But I know he can make it!

Written by Jonah's mom, Michelle

If you would like to donate in Jonah's honor Click Here

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