

## Hudson's Story

On a Tuesday morning in early November of 2007, I visited my doctor for a routine 33 week checkup. I felt completely normal, was excited to learn how our baby was growing and had no prior indication of complications. During my appointment, I was surprised to learn that I had high blood pressure and had lost a significant amount of amniotic fluid. My doctor explained to Matthew and me that I would be immediately admitted to the hospital for continued monitoring. It was a very emotional time.

After being admitted to the hospital, my blood pressure returned to normal, however, my amniotic fluid levels did not increase. After 4 days of tests and around the clock monitoring, it was determined that the best environment for our baby to thrive would be outside of the womb. I had an amniocentesis to assess lung surfactant levels which showed that the baby's lungs were mature enough to safely enter this world. I would be induced and deliver the following morning. However, our first born had a different plan. That same evening, around 11pm, I began having contractions which caused stress to the baby. His heart rate dropped during each contraction. I was prepped for an emergency c-section. My epidural failed and it was decided quickly to put me under anesthesia, therefore, my husband was not allowed in the room while our baby was lifted into this world. Hudson James Carle was born on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 12:28am, weighing 2 pounds, 12 ounces and was 16 inches long. He was the size of a wine bottle.

Matthew was told by a nurse that I was placed under anesthesia and would not be permitted in the delivery room. He read a phone book in the waiting room to keep him occupied for 42 minutes. The same nurse returned with Hudson wrapped in a blanket. They sat quietly together and Matthew cried. Hudson was a healthy little boy. The full crown of his head fit into Matthew's hand. Hudson's hand could grasp only Matthew's finger tip. The experience was remarkable, like that of any proud father, but somehow Hudson was so preciously angelic, fragile even, but with a grand presence.

The nurses then brought Hudson to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and soon after, I was wheeled into the room to finally meet him. They placed him in my arms and I didn't think he looked that small after all. He had all 10 fingers, 10 toes, he was the most perfect baby I had ever seen.

Even though Hudson was generally healthy, he still required a feeding tube and an occasional treatment under the 'bili lights' to cure his minor jaundice. I was very anxious every time I entered the NICU. Everyone was required to wash their hands and put on a hospital gown upon entering. At the time, the NICU was one large room with rows upon rows of preemies and other babies with health complications. I can still picture where Hudson's isolette was located in that room ... and hear the beeping monitors.

Hudson was due Christmas Eve. He was born at 34 weeks to the day; 6 weeks prematurely on November 10<sup>th</sup>. He stayed in the NICU for 4 days and then in the Continuing Care Nursery for 2 ½ weeks. As explained by the doctors prior to his birth, they expected him to be a "feeder and grower" and to our pleasure he became known as the "barracuda". He was a non-stop eater. We brought him home 20 days before his

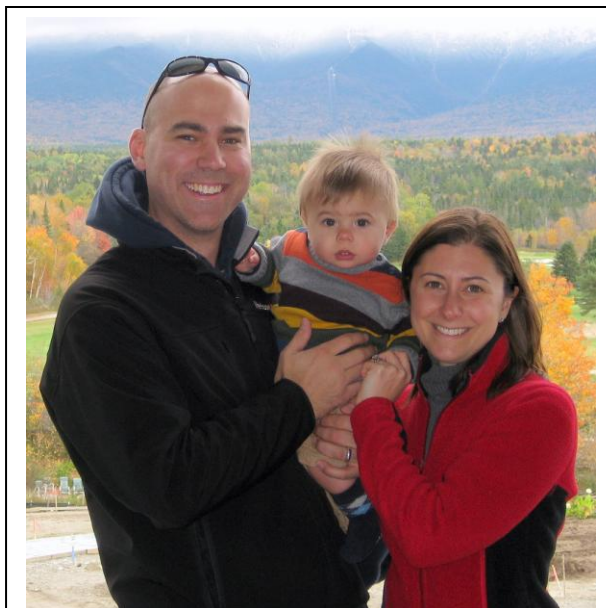
due date, weighing a whopping 3 pounds, 8 ounces; the second smallest baby to ever leave Maine Medical Center. It was the best Christmas present Matthew and I could ever wish for.

Today, Hudson is a happy and healthy 1 ½ year old, reaching all of his developmental goals for his real age. He remains a “good eater” as his great-grandfather Carle would have said ... and is growing like a weed. We are blessed and well aware that this is not always the case with children born prematurely.

Like many premature births, Hudson’s was due to unknown causes. The March of Dimes funds important research that is needed to help find ways to reduce the occurrence of premature birth. We encourage you to spread the word to your friends, family and co-workers on how they can support this cause by joining the March for Babies, volunteering, donating or simply to keep spreading the word.



**Hudson Carle in the NICU**



**Matthew. Hudson and Kristen**