

Faith's Story

Faith was born in September of 2008. Within 24 hours of birth, her skin turned yellow and she was diagnosed with the neonatal jaundice - a very common condition that usually clears up within two weeks.

“Faith had frequent visits to her pediatrician as she was eating a lot, yet not gaining weight and crying in pain,” explains Jenn, Faith’s mother.

“We were told for breast-fed babies it takes longer for the skin to return to normal colour, but once the whites of her eyes became yellow Faith was admitted to the hospital immediately.”

Faith did not have neonatal jaundice. She was diagnosed with biliary atresia when she was 10 weeks old.

For Jenn and her husband, Shawn, all their joy, hopes and dreams for their daughter turned into anxiety and fears. Their life was turned upside down and their focus was on doing everything possible to make sure Faith survived.

They had so many questions that could not be answered. There is no known cause for biliary atresia and no cure. In biliary atresia the bile duct that leads from the liver to the intestine becomes damaged preventing bile from leaving the liver. This results in a buildup of bile which in turn causes damage to the liver. Unless bile flow can be established, children rarely survive beyond two years of age.

Faith needed a liver transplant to save her life, and it was her mother who stepped forward and donated a part of her own liver to her daughter. Jenn’s Mom never went back to work after Faith’s initial visit to the hospital. She immediately retired to be there for her daughter and granddaughter as they recovered from their liver transplant surgeries.

Jacob, Faith’s big brother now 12 years old also suffered. His childhood was filled with worry and concern for his little sister. He also missed out on treasured ‘sister-time’ with Faith and ‘parent-time’ because of the frequent visits to the hospital.

“Since Faith must take medications to suppress her immune system, she is at a much higher risk of complications from other illnesses and infections. With a liver transplant there is always a chance of rejection, this risk never ends.”





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Today Faith is leading a normal life and is in Grade 1 at school. She dances, plays soccer, does gymnastics, and is a great swimmer. Her family is so proud of what she has accomplished. Although Faith must remain on anti-rejection medication for the rest of her life, she still has a very positive outlook and she is a constant reminder to them of the real importance of life.

Faith's entire family was deeply affected by liver disease, but they did not lose hope.

