

Fitnut's for Crohn's - City to Surf Perth 2011



As time passes and new experiences take precedence over old, past hurts can easily be forgotten - and let's face it - sometimes they should be. But in our case I don't want to forget what we went through as a family, I don't want to forget how very close we came to losing our child. Because, to me, forgetting and "getting past it" means that I am doing nothing about what happened to us, I am doing nothing from stopping it from happening again. And again. And again.

Looking back now, Jade has been home & well for longer than she was ever seriously ill. Even writing this now, it feels impossible that the time she was ill appears, on the surface, to be such a short period in our lives. Because at the time it seemed eternal. It seemed then, that we were stuck in an endless nightmare where no one had an answer, no one understood and no one could help. And no one even could really see what was happening to us. Jade developed Crohn's during the early months of her pregnancy at 20 years old. Almost straight away she began to display classic Crohn's symptoms, but was not diagnosed until 12 months later. During her 8th month of pregnancy, it was decided "it" must be appendicitis and was rushed to Perth for surgery. And certainly – she did appear to be well, we all (family and Doctors alike) assumed appendicitis was what her problem was all along.

However, when baby Keira was only one month old Jade complained of a "sore hip". Little was thought of it really – a newborn baby was more demanding than that! Over the next month or so the "sore hip" became a crippling agonizing problem. Jade was literally doubled over, unable to walk without crutches. She lost weight. A LOT of weight. From a healthy 55kg / 161cm tall when she conceived, to 41kg. (Eventually dropping to 38.5kg at her lowest) We were told she had, among other things, Scoliosis, wheat intolerance, Celiac's disease, bursa of the hip, she was anaemic, she needed acupuncture, she needed physiotherapy, and she needed a dietician. We spent most of those two months or so at the local GP's office. At least three times a week. Sometimes literally begging them to DO something, pleading with them to admit Jade to hospital, to please, please, please see that something serious was WRONG, they were missing something. Eventually through, I think, us nagging enough, we were referred to a specialist GP.

The appointment was for three weeks time. When a mother has to suddenly begin to lift her child in and out of the bath at 20 years of age, three weeks is a very long time. Finally we had some luck – a cancellation meant Jade could see the specialist the very next day. After 15 minutes with Jade, he (my hero) knew what was wrong. After that short amount of time

he said "I think you have Crohn's." He then chased up copies of Jade's *existing* scans and confirmed his initial opinion. We later received a call from her original GP, apologising for missing Crohn's. He went so far as to tell me he was so glad she was able to see the specialist early – as "she would not have made it another three weeks." A comment that even now sends a shiver down my back.

But, she was admitted immediately and further tests done to confirm that the specialist was right. What followed were, especially for Jade, just as horrendous – blood transfusions, transferred to Perth, medication, injections, drips, drains, infections, complications and surgery. Accompanied by her father, she spent two and half months in Perth getting treatment, getting well. But without her baby girl. In the end, she was separated from her child from the age of about one month til Keria was 5 months when she returned from Perth. Stoma in place, thin and pale- but home. On the road to recovery. The road has been bumpy and sometimes uphill but compared to the original illness, nothing we can't handle with a smile.

So that is why, as a family -

- Jade (now 21 years old)
- Her daughter Keira (almost 2 years old)
- Skye (older sister, age 23)
- Thomas (younger brother, age 10)
- Her Dad &
- Her Mum – me!

We are running in this year's City to Surf fun run in Perth. Not only to raise funds and awareness for Crohn's & Colitis Australia – that is a passion of both mine and Jade's now but also in celebration. Jade is here, she is healthy, she is smiling. She is here. She survived.