



Chapter Eight
Seven Months Old,
CPAP Support

♥ May 16, 2005 at 05:02 PM CDT

We had a big weekend...improved CPAP settings, special visitors, great nurses, and a sleep deprivation marathon. The latter we are still trying to recover from.

Since put on CPAP Thursday, Blake has become more comfortable with the new sensation of air being rushed through his nostrils. The difference between nasal cannula and CPAP is that CPAP provides pressure assistance to keep his airway open. To try this yourself...stick your head out of the car window while traveling 55 mph. Or just trust us, not what most of us want to endure 24 hours a day. Since starting CPAP Blake has adjusted to this new sensation and has been weaned from 100% to 70% oxygen. We will be hoping this continues to be lowered incrementally to 30-40% in the coming week. We also want Blake to show that he can be weaned of the pressure slowly too. All this in hopes of getting to nasal cannula again.

To help keep Blake comfortable and to assist in keeping those blasted prongs in Blake's nose...Kimberly and I tag teamed from Thursday morning until Saturday night. We stayed with him 24 hours a day to give him the best shot at staying off the ventilator. The nurses were great through the weekend. Thank you Wayna and Leoni!!! They finally kicked us out Saturday night, actually Sunday morning at 1 am. I'm not sure if they were just tired of my jokes, or the fact that we both looked like zombies. In either case, Blake was sleeping soundly and we headed for the House of Payne for some rest.

Though Saturday was a long day...we look back at it with great pleasure. We were expecting our night primary nurse from the NICU in Austin to stop in for a visit. You all remember Laurel...yes, she spent many a

nervous nights with Blake over our stay in the NICU. It was so great to see her...and in regular cloths, too. Thank you so much for stopping in to see us Laurel, it meant a great deal to us!! And to our surprise 30 minutes after Laurel exited, another visitor rang in. It was the Medical Director of the NICU in Austin, Dr. Zebb. For real!!!! Dr. Zebb was also in town and came by to see Blake and his old stomping grounds. He completed his residency at TCH in the early 90's. We were so overwhelmed to see him and share how Blake had been improving in the past weeks. We took some pictures and will post them soon. Dr. Zebb even laid down on the mat with Blake to pose for a picture. Kimberly and I were overwhelmed to have Laurel and Dr. Zebb stop by and see Blake. They are two special people in Blake's life. We feel so blessed to have such caring professionals take personal time to follow up with our son. Saturday was a great day.

Visitors continued Sunday, as Grandma & Grandpa Johnson spent the day with us. Though we had gotten some sleep...it was apparent to both that we were indeed zombies. Thanks for all the goodies and creative gifts...and especially for the visit. I think they were surprised to see how much Blake has grown in the past weeks.

As I'm writing this, I can feel the gas tank is getting dangerously low on fuel...better wrap this up quick. Watch for pictures from the past couple of weeks and even an addition to the TCH collage. Thank you so much Blake's Buddies for getting together over the weekend. I'll follow up with more regarding you all. You are the best friends and family ever. We will never be able to express all that you mean to us. Blake is blessed...

Running on Empty...

Daddy

♥ May 22, 2005 at 03:30 PM CDT

Special Sunday Report...

Daddy here, taking a break at the RMH for a few minutes. Blake's had a good weekend, resting mostly, with good saturations while on the CPAP. The doctor's reduced the oxygen to 65% yesterday, and Blake stayed the same. Tomorrow the whole team will be back, so we'll see what the plan will be for the week. Blake's IV line has been out since Tuesday...with all infection concerns over. Let's keep those bugs away for a good while. Blake can move about more freely without extra lines in.

We're waiting for a good dirty diaper, as Blake has been without a blowout for a couple of days. This has caused him to have some higher residuals today, but some of that is just normal baby-stuff. Anyhow...Blake is trying, as he gets mad and red in the face. He is ready to have this CPAP out and gone...

Blake sends birthday wishes out to Aunt Michelle and Uncle Michael this weekend!! Make good wishes!!

Hope everyone is having a great weekend...summer is just around the corner. We've almost touched all the seasons w/ Blake. Summer in Houston is one we'd like to skip. Keep up the faith...

Love from Chad, Kimberly, & Blake!!!

♥ **May 23, 2005 at 08:29 AM CDT**

Ask and you shall receive....

Not long after Sunday's message, Blake followed through with expectations and delivered the goods. He rested much better after the download. Mr. Chung stopped by for a visit, and one of Blake's favorite nurses, Lee, took over for the night shift. Blake's sats. improved yesterday, even with the O2 reduction to 65. We'll see what the week's plan will be shortly. I just touched base with Kimberly to let her know I'd safely returned to Austin...and she said Blake was sleeping in.

Here's to a good week, everyone!!

Take care...

Daddy

♥ **May 27, 2005 at 08:12 AM CDT**

Memorial Weekend here we come,

We hope everyone has great plans for the long weekend, even if we get some much needed rain throughout. Daddy's taking three movies to watch over the weekend...though I doubt we'll get them all in. Our attention stays on little Blake for most of the day. And recently its been all good things to focus on.

Blake has had another good week. This week's ultrasound showed that all the internal swelling has gone away from his belly. Most of this swelling has been with Blake since his early infections, and to have it all gone must

make Blake feel more comfortable. CPAP continues to go well also. Blake has registered high oxygen saturations in his blood...meaning his breathing is going well. The doctors are weaning very conservatively, but that is alright. Just keep up the good trends, Blake!

The ultrasound also showed a normal size spleen, and that the cystic area of fluid had gotten smaller. All good news. Blake's chest x-ray also looked great this week. Prayers are continuing to boost this little boy!

Each week I try to introduce a few of the folks that are helping us in so many ways. Last night I visited with our neighbors the Warners. I have not been able to chat with them for months. They have been following the Carepages, and look forward to the day Kimberly and Blake come home.

They have been so very kind to pitch in and have their lawn service mow our yard a few times. This has been a big surprise to me and such a thoughtful act. Thank you Judy and Don!!!

We hope everyone has a safe and fun weekend.
Check the latest photos...

Daddy's Out!

♥ **June 01, 2005 at 08:43 AM CDT**

Already June?!? Kids are getting out of school, summer heat starting to rise, Memorial Day over...

We had a good Memorial Day weekend...for Daddy, three full days in a row with Mommy and Blake were just what I needed. Blake seems to be

growing each day, and it warms our hearts to see him enjoying himself for a change. We now find that Blake wakes up a couple of times a day and enjoys playing with his fingers and mouth. Blake is even sitting up with a little balancing help for a few minutes. He no longer likes his belly time, partially because he now can lay on his back comfortably due to the belly swelling all gone. As you can see from the latest pictures, he's growing.

You will also see from the pictures that Blake had an extra special visit this weekend from the Fetters. Pastor Fetter and Mary surprised us with a loving visit to check up on Blake and our family. Seeing him in person surprises most people, especially those like Pastor who have seen Blake at many stages over the past months. We joined in prayer around Blake and thanked God for all the blessings. Thank you so much David and Mary, your visit made our day.

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(I have to go to a meeting...but will add to this this message later today so check back in. Gotta do the work thing...)

Back for more...

From many vantages, Blake is doing so much better. We'll be praying for a good echocardiogram tomorrow. We hope to have more information on Friday as to Blake's next couple of weeks. If we hear good things regarding the heart, then the doctor's can resume weaning the oxygen requirements of the CPAP, then eventually the pressure component.

Today starts a new rotation of the neonatologists in the unit. Dr. Adams will direct Blake's care this next month. We know that the other doctors will be stopping by to check on Blake, as they all have gotten attached to him. Blake celebrated his fourth month in Houston on Monday. How time flies...

We hope to continue to share positive updates with all of you. Remember to check the photos, Mommy especially liked Blake's baseball outfit...check out those baseball slippers.

Take Care.

Daddy

♥ June 02, 2005 at 04:24 PM CDT

Echo-Report in...

Good news from the cardiologist, the echocardiogram showed normal heart functions from the ventricles. We are very relieved to hear this. The VSDs were still described as Swiss cheese, but hopefully some of the smaller openings will close as Blake grows. This will be something for all of us to focus on during the coming months. But for now, they are happy with his status.

Whew....needless to say Kimberly and I were sweating this over the past days. I'm glad we got the results so quick. Keep on growing little man!! I'll make this one short and sweet...Goodnight now!

Daddy

PS-One last note to mention, Kimberly and I wanted to wish our primary day nurse Wayna a wonderful trip to Hawaii, as she is heading off to get married. Prayers for safe travels and a magical wedding. Thank you Wayna for all you do!!!

♥ **June 07, 2005 at 04:37 PM CDT**

Good Afternoon, Sorry you haven't heard from me lately, but I've been busy watching Blake grow. I am sooooooooooooo proud of our little boy. Blake has been doing very well with his physical therapy. Yesterday for the 1st time, Debbie the P.T. stood him up. Grandpa Kramr was there to witness the moment. He did very well and even tried to straighten his legs. Today, Debbie began to teach him how to roll from side to side. She did all his therapy and rolled him one last time and he fell asleep on his side. It is fun to see Blake do something different than just lay in bed. He enjoys it too.

We had a special visit from Aunt Henri, Heather and Cayson today. Cayson you are just growing so fast. Thank you for the visit. I will talk to you later. Thank you so much for the continued thoughts and prayers. Just remember it is working!!!!!!

Love,

Mommy Kimmy :)

♥ **June 10, 2005 at 08:16 AM CDT**

Best of Friday's to you all... It has been too long...since the last Daddy update. Lot's of good progress to report, though of course baby steps. (Literally) Blake has been working with physical therapy almost everyday. Blake's 'new moves' include sitting up with better balance, rolling from side to side w/ assistance, sitting on the therapist knee w/ legs

dangling, and getting into the all-four position. All of this with close attention and helpful hands to steady and support him as he tends to fall asleep towards the end of the session. That pretty much ends the days work...when Blake rolls to the side and falls fast asleep. Mommy is very proud of him and is enjoying these play times. Keep up the good work, son.

The CPAP continues, with Blake currently receiving 45% O2. The doctors are pleased with his ability to be weaned over the past week. We bet the doctors will hold steady over the weekend.

Blake topped the 11 lbs. mark last weekend. Yes, every pound brings a cheer from Mommy and Daddy. This past one occurred as Mommy and Daddy took over bath time and weighing all themselves. Mommy cares for Blake pretty much by herself these days when she is with him. Everyone thinks Mommy should be on the payroll. Blake pays her with continuing to improve and a special delivery from time to time. Kimberly is holding strong...but looks forward to not having to leave her little boy each night as she retires to get a few hours sleep. Dear, you are wonderful...

Daddy's making a milk run today...Blake continues to drink down the milk better. The doctors are slowly adjusting his feedings to get away from the continuous feeds he's been on. I'll include more on this next time. All I know is that Daddy's happy to make the stop to bring in donor milk from Austin. The Mother's Milk Bank has been great!

We hope that everyone has a wonderful weekend, and here's one to remember.... 'Drink water....lots of it!'

Best wishes and prayers for the entire Blake Bunch.

Chad