



David

"OUR HOSPITAL TEAM BECAME OUR FAMILY AWAY FROM HOME"



DAVID'S STORY

David celebrated many of his “firsts”—his first Thanksgiving, first Christmas, first New Year’s Day, first birthday—in the hospital. “It was hard to believe that within days, we went from handing out Halloween candy to getting treatment for cancer,” recalls David’s mom Rosa.

Rosa remembers the moment when everything changed. David was taking antibiotics for what they thought was a scalp infection. He became pale, had stomach bloating and wouldn’t eat. “He wasn’t his cheerful 8-month-old self. I knew something was wrong,” says Rosa. A trip to the emergency room confirmed her and husband’s worst fears.

After transferring to Nemours, David was diagnosed with infantile acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Because of his young age, David was at a higher risk for complications from the chemotherapy. This meant he would spend the next nine months in the hospital.

“We knew the treatment journey would be difficult, and it was,” says Rosa. Each round of chemo brought a new set of problems, from diaper rashes and mouth ulcers, to nausea and many sleepless nights. But David endured. “One week he’d battle the side effects, and the next he was smiling and playing as if nothing happened,” recalls Rosa.

And then came COVID-19. “Things were uncertain and scary, but we had to stay strong and continue our path,” Rosa says. The new hospital policies made Rosa feel safe, but it meant no more visits from family and friends. “Our hospital team became our family away from home,” she adds.

Rosa says that even though they’re isolated in the hospital, they’re never alone. “The nurses and Child Life team make sure we’re coping and comfortable,” says Rosa. “And art therapy and Wednesday Bingo have been the lights that pull us through.”

David is nearing the end of his nine-month hospitalization and Rosa is optimistic about the future. She’s thankful for the love and care from the Nemours cancer team. “While David’s treatment is far from over, we’ve made it through the hardest part,” she says. “We’ll take home many memories and will hold all the people who helped us very near to our hearts.”

Rosa’s advice to parents at the beginning of this journey: “Don’t let cancer take your faith, your happiness or your ability to see good in life. Take it one day at a time, or even one hour at a time. Be positive and be strong.”

Help us give every child like David a healthy chance. [Donate Today!](#)