



Chapter Five
Four Months Old,
Extubation Attempt

♥February 16, 2005 at 02:45 PM CST

Good afternoon!

Hello from Houston. Blake had a busy day today. The pressure support trial has continued!!! Everyone is very impressed with him, breathing on his own!!! The doctor hopes Blake will continue to show us what he can do. Dr. Fernandez hopes to extubate him on Tuesday if Blake is ready. Mommy is a little nervous, but I know my boy can do it!! One of the surgeons came and pulled out Blake's central line today. We do not want any risk of an infection. Blake is free of plastic in his veins!

We have been holding Blake once a day, usually in the evening. I enjoy holding my son so much. There is nothing better than holding your son and seeing your husband in him. Thank you Chad for giving me a son. You are a wonderful husband. I became tearful reading your email from Valentine's Day. Thank you sweetheart.

Please hold your children close and tell them how much you love them. Children are a present from God. Blake has enjoyed spending the day with grandpa today. Well, I better go watch Blake sleep.

Love you,
Kimberly :)

P.S. Blake wanted to thank everyone for visiting him.

♥February 17, 2005 at 07:15 PM CST

Greetings!

Today I had another special moment with my son. I held him kangaroo style (skin to skin). It is difficult to put my feelings in words. It is so nice to feel him up against my skin and feel his heartbeat again. I felt like a normal mother for just a few moments, even though he is hooked up to a ventilator. I look forward to the day I can hold him without the ventilator. I love my son more than I could of ever imagined.

Grandma Kramr stayed with me last night and spent the day with us.

Thank you Mom.

Well, I better go check on my boy. Shift change is almost over.

Love you all,

Kimberly :)

♥February 21, 2005 at 09:22 AM CST

Good morning from Grandma Kramr!

Well, today is the day that we have all been waiting for! Kimberly phoned us this morning to let us know that the doctors plan to extubate (remove ventilator tube) today! The process will begin with a chest x-ray to make sure that there are no unforeseen problems. Blake will then be moved to a different ventilator machine. This final trial will be a very slow process

and will probably continue throughout most of the day. Once the doctors feel confident that Blake is ready -- they will remove the vent tube.

We ask that you offer up your special prayers for this brave little guy today! He has conquered so many obstacles and today's hurdle will definitely be a BIG one! With the strength of our prayer circle, we know that Blake will be breathing on his own by the end of the day! God continues to be good to us and we know that by His hand Baby Blake will make this very important step towards recovery.

We will try to keep you informed throughout the day of his progress. Thanks again for your love, support and most of all prayers. Grandpa and I are on our way to witness the big event. Love to all----

♥ **February 21, 2005 at 10:16 AM CST**

Good Morning,

The doctors just rounded on Blake. Extubation in about 30 min. Please continue to pray for our son. I can't wait to hear his first cry. I will send a message later...

Love you all,
Mommy :)

♥February 21, 2005 at 03:50 PM CST

Great News!!!

Blake is doing great breathing without the straw!! He was extubated at 10:50 am. They used a oxygen hood for about an hour then changed to just a NASAL CANULA!! I can't believe it! He hasn't cried yet, probably because he is hoarse. He has been trying to make a few sounds it just sounds raspy. I'm sure he will let out a cry in a few days. I held him skin to skin for about 2 hours. As I placed him in bed to change his diaper he opened his eyes and looked all around. He just looks so cute without all the tape on his face. Daddy is holding him now. Thank you so much for all your prayers. We need continued prayers so Blake doesn't become tired of breathing. Thank you. Have a good day!

Love,

Kimberly :)

♥February 22, 2005 at 10:56 AM CST

Daddy Update...

If we keep this up, we may put reality TV out of business...
I am truly overwhelmed with the following this little miracle boy has.
Thank you all for your warm messages and encouragement for our son Blake. Your prayers are uplifting him from his early start in this world.

Yesterday was the second best day for me as a Daddy. Of course Mommy and Son making it through the birth was the first, but yesterday was one of the best days we have endured in a while. Blake is breathing without the ventilator!!!!!! We need continued prayers for today, as the doctor's know that once the babies last 48 hours off the ventilators, they have a very good shot of staying off it completely. We are all cheering for you son!!! "You can do it..."

Blake was a little restless last night, and praise to Mommy for staying with him all night. I picked Kim up and returned her to the Ronald McDonald House as I was leaving for Austin this morning. (5:15 am) Believe me, Kimberly was ready and deserving for a soft pillow and some ZZZZ's. As I pulled into Austin I checked with Blake's nurse, and he was doing fine. Today is a very important day, as his endurance and strength will be tested as never before. Kimberly just called, and she feels better too after getting some rest. I love you dear...please keep your enthusiasm to hugs and kisses. And watch nurse Caroline too, the both of you still have that look in your eyes. No munching on little Blake!

My commute to Austin this morning was through a thick fog for most of the trip. I could not help drawing connections to our last four months and to Blake's fight for life. At times, we could not expect which turns lie ahead... We certainly could not see far ahead or if/when it would all end. Sometimes we thought we were through the toughest times, only for more to surround us unexpectedly. We , and I mean all of us (family & friends), know this route well. This is how life unfolds for us all. But we continue to blaze ahead with faith and hope for what lies ahead. I pray Blake is finding his way through this fog and ready to step out into the sunshine. I pray for the day when I see his face glowing from the warmth of the sun while bundled in his mommy's arms.

You are never out of my thoughts little Blake, blaze ahead....
Thanks to all of you for continued prayers and support. I will post photos soon of Blake's progress, and cute cheeks. Best Wishes...

Prayer and Family,
Daddy

♥ **February 24, 2005 at 12:50 PM CST**

Warm greeting to all Blake followers.

Blake has done very well off of the ventilator. The critical 48 hour time frame after removing the breathing tube came and went without incident. He currently has a nasal canula, which is expected and will remain for some time. This is a huge step for our little fighter. I talked with Grandpa Kramr this morning. He sounded very excited to finally get to hold Blake. The other grandparents should have their "first holds" soon as well. Blake has been moved to a baby condo (enclosed bed) for now. They had noticed that when he was being held his saturation numbers had been close to 100% but when he was in his bed wrapped in a blanket they were not as high. But still very good. The thinking is that if he is not as confined then he may be more comfortable, therefore keeping his sats higher. The condo can help regulate his temperature without having the confinement of the blanket. This seems to be helping as yesterday evening his numbers were higher.

That's all the news for now. New pictures should be posted soon.

Uncle Michael

♥February 27, 2005 at 01:26 PM CST

Greetings to Blake's Prayer Circle,

I just left daddy holding his son. It is such a blessing to see this special moment. We have enjoyed the weekend with family and friends. We celebrated Jessica's birthday yesterday with the family. Not many 7 year olds can say they have had a birthday party in the food court of a hospital. It was a nice celebration.

Chad and I had dinner and a movie at Lee Ann & Brian's last night. Thank you for the fajitas and mindless television to watch. Grandma & Grandpa Johnson came in this morning. They are amazed how well Blake is doing off the ventilator. Grandma Johnson went in to see her son holding Blake.

Don't worry Blake fans the pictures will be coming this week. I have to give up the camera for a week in order for daddy to load the pictures.

Have a relaxing Sunday!!

Love,

Kimberly :)



♥ February 28, 2005 at 08:56 AM CST

Pictures are worth a thousand words....

Good Morning friends and family, I hope everyone finds these photos well worth the wait. Blake had a wonderful weekend, with lots of visitors all cheering him on. I'll send a more descriptive message later, but did not want to keep you waiting for the photos. Thanks to everyone for the overwhelming support and caring we continue to receive. Blake's progress is a reflection of all of your love...

Please check out the latest photos, all big moments for Blake.

Here's to a good week,
I'll continue the update later...

Daddy

♥ **March 02, 2005 at 12:38 PM CST**

Blake is facing some challenges today regarding his breathing.

I do not have many details at this point but he could use some extra prayers today. When we find out more, someone will post an update but for now please pray for our little angel.

Uncle Michael

♥ **March 02, 2005 at 01:34 PM CST**

Update time....

Daddy here, due to some small signs of increased oxygen needed over the past couple of days...the doctors wanted to get a chest x-ray and blood gas report on Blake this morning. The x-ray showed that there was increased fluid in his lungs, and the blood gas report showed that Blake had more carbon dioxide in his blood than what they would like to see. Our little champion has been working hard the past week on breathing on his own and looks to need a little more assistance.

The doctors have changed Blake to Nasal CPAP, which is pressure/oxygen assistance at his nostrils. The doctors will try this first before re-intubating Blake. They want to do everything possible to not go back to the ventilator, but that may be needed. The good side of the coin, is that Blake

has shown us that he can breath on his own...he may need more time for his lungs to mature and grow before he can stay off the ventilator. For now...let's pray that the Nasal CPAP will provide enough help to clear up those lungs.

Prayers needed...of course this happens on a rainy day. Let's get that sun out quick. Love to you all, and especially to our beautiful and strong son Blake. Daddy is thinking of you...all my love.

Daddy

♥ **March 04, 2005 at 12:53 PM CST**

Good afternoon,

As Chad described in the previous message regarding possible re-intubation, this did occur yesterday morning (Thurs). Blake did well on the nasal CPAP, although it was a challenge to keep the prongs in his nose. Grandma Johnson and I worked in shifts to watch over him closely on Wed night. Thursday morning it was time to do a chest x-ray. Blake was resting comfortably on his belly (favorite spot), but they had to turn him over on his back (least favorite spot) for the x-ray and he became very upset, clamped down and stopped breathing. Unfortunately the doctors and nurses came running and Blake had to be intubated again.

The sun is out today--Thank GOD!! Blake is resting comfortably on the ventilator. Daddy is at his side. He enjoys one of us holding his pacifier,

especially with the sucrose water we give him for a treat. Yes, he is sucking a pacifier even though there is a tube in his mouth. We have been doing this for months, so he doesn't reject the bottle when it is time to feed by mouth.

We HOPE the ventilator is only TEMPORARY. We are hoping that the decrease in fluid in his lungs clears with the lasix (pulls fluid out of his lungs) and decreasing his feeds (less volume). We need to pray that he continues to grow, so he will out grow his liver. Hopefully his liver will begin to shrink, so he will be able to breathe easier.

We have to remember, including myself that Blake did breathe on his own for 9 DAYS, which is a huge accomplishment!!! He WILL do it again!!

I love each and every one of you. I look forward to the day when Blake is back on nasal cannula. Thank you for your continued prayers. Please have a good weekend. Please do not take breathing for granted. It is a gift from GOD.

Love you all,
Kimberly :)

P.S. As Grandma Johnson says, don't forget to breathe!

♥ March 08, 2005 at 07:09 PM CST

Good evening to everyone from Kim,

Blake is doing well on the ventilator. He is only on 33% of oxygen for all of you that need details. We are hoping to continue to wean him off the

oxygen. The tentative plan is to try to get Blake off the ventilator slowly. We are happy that they are giving him another chance to try and extubate. We all know that Blake is in control of the plan and of course God.

Grandma Kramr has helped me change a few diapers today and yesterday. Grandma is a great pacifier holder also. Blake was moved to a room with a view yesterday. Now we have flowers to admire throughout the day. I believe Blake enjoyed the sun on his face!
I will talk to you soon. Love you all.

Love,
Kimberly :)

♥ March 10, 2005 at 09:04 AM CST

Good Morning Everyone,

I hope and trust this beautiful weather is signs of good days to come. I hope everyone is taking advantage of this spring break weather to get out and do 'whatever turns you on'. I know Kimberly is enjoying that room with a view, as Blake was moved to an isolation room that looks into a courtyard with blooming flowers. Having sunshine flood his room will certainly remind us that everyone's love and support are flowing his way.

We received a good report from the cardiologist as they were reviewing Blake's latest echocardiogram and felt the PA Band and the VSDs were not contributing to Blake's fluid build-up in his lungs. Therefore no immediate heart surgery needed. It was this build-up of fluid that worked toward Blake needing ventilator support again. For now, the doctor's want to see

good weight gain and continued decreasing oxygen requirements. We will get back to pressure support trials soon...

One humorous update that Mommy and Daddy love as it proves Blake is like all little boys. Blake has learned to 'toot'. I know, the little things...but you have to laugh. As his feedings have increased, we have noticed to be careful when changing his position or picking him up to hold him. The movement will help relieve some built up surprise...just for Mommy and Daddy. 'Boys will be boys.'

Though we have been a little disappointed since Blake went back to the ventilator, looking at the bright side of things reminds us how far Blake has come. Thanks to everyone's prayers and support we will endure this test. Blake is giving us his all, and with God's will...he will one day come home.

Please send prayers for Mommy's strength as she surely feels she is repeating the same day over and over again. I love you dear...and can't wait to return to Houston tomorrow. Let the sunshine in.

Good Spring Break All....

Love,

Daddy

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♥ **March 14, 2005 at 02:17 PM CST**

Good Monday to you all, Mommy here with Blake. Today Blake was moved to a big boy bed--A crib!! The cushion is much thicker than the bed with the warmer. (plastic tray as Grandma Kramr calls it). As the nurse

and RT switched the beds, I stood and held Blake and rocked him. He liked to be rocked. I wanted to walk him around the room, but the ventilator tubes would not reach. He fell fast asleep after we placed him in the crib. Finally a CRIB after 5 months!!!!!!

The doctor weaned the O2 a little from 38% to 35%. His blood gas looked great! Everyone was impressed. I wanted to wean him again, but we need to take baby steps. We are hoping to start pressure support trials at the end of the week. If you remember this is where Blake would breathe on his own for a couple of hours. The order for now is to keep growing and shrink the liver, were a little lower than last week!

I want to wish Grandma Johnson a HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!! I also wanted to share that a few of the cousins were able to see Blake through the window this weekend. Your face and hand prints are still on the glass--Brooks, Kristen and Chase. The nurses got a kick out of seeing you through the glass. We were the first family to leave our prints on the window.

I hope everyone can feel or see the sunshine today!
Love you all, gotta go hold my son!

Kimberly :)

