

Hayden and Hunter's Journey

Last September, Trish Helman, newly married and expecting, was spending her day at home in Crescent Heights. At 28 weeks pregnant with twins, Trish was trying to catch up on rest. She started to feel some mild cramps but nothing too painful. Initially, Trish didn't think much of it.

Maybe it was new mom nerves or the fact that her husband was out of town, but Trish decided to go to the Maternity Clinic to get it checked out. A doctor examined Trish and to Trish's surprise, the doctor informed her that she was in labour. There is no time to waste; the twins are on their way - NOW! A team from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) rushes in to prepare for the twins who are twelve weeks premature.

Trish's tiny boys, Hayden and Hunter arrive quickly and an air ambulance rushes them to a hospital in Calgary. Hayden and Hunter weigh less than three pounds each. They are strong little boys but they have a big fight ahead of them. Trish follows her sons to Calgary and spends weeks staying in hotels until Hayden and Hunter are old enough to be transferred to the Hospital in Medicine Hat.

My family is close. (Transferring back to Medicine Hat) made everything so much easier

Hayden and Hunter require feeding tubes and medical care twenty-four hours a day in special incubators called OmniBeds. The OmniBeds keep them warm and protected, helping them to grow stronger and healthier. Trish spends every day at the Hospital, holding her boys for as long as possible. She goes home only to eat and sleep.

You can tell (the nurses) love what they do. It makes it easier when you have to leave your kids at night

"I can't say enough good about the nurses" says Trish. "They really love what they do and work hard to make the NICU feel like home. As hard as it was to leave every night, I knew my boys were in good hands."

After months of care, Hayden and Hunter head home for the first time. There are many follow up appointments ahead but they will receive care here in Medicine Hat and won't require long travels. This September during Hayden and Hunter's first birthday you would never know what a difficult start these two little boys had. They are very active; crawling, climbing and exploring. The Health Foundation has provided two OmniBeds for the NICU needed to care for premature babies like Hayden and Hunter.