

Our son William [REDACTED] was born at twenty-five weeks gestation and weighed one pound, ten ounces. He was intubated for eight weeks; he was then placed on a vapor-thum (a c-pap type machine). A g-tube was placed, because there was a concern of aspiration while trying to eat. William then stopped eating, and required regular tube feedings.

William spent seven months in the hospital. During that time, he had extensive oral and physical therapy. Upon discharge, we continued occupational and feeding therapy twice per week which enabled William to make slow progress; however, he continued to be nearly completely dependant on g-tube feedings. At age five, my wife and I felt William would never be rid of a feeding tube, and knew we needed to do something drastic. We researched hospital based, intense feeding programs. We decided on Children's Hospital of Orange County in California. Since we lived in [REDACTED] at the time, taking on the challenge of the program was difficult. With the help of the wonderful staff at CHOC, we were accepted in to the program.

I was to do the first two weeks and my wife would do the second two. This was a little tricky since William had a twin sister. Upon entering the program, it was determined that William was 95 % dependant on G-tube feedings. Our one week stay at the Ronald McDonald house, along with three weeks of in-house therapy, was spent working three times a day with the feeding team. We were visited daily by support staff while we worked very hard on practicing the techniques that we learned throughout our daily sessions. William seemed to enjoy the program and the one-on-one interaction.

Upon leaving the program, William was 35% dependant on his G-tube; we had a great base to continue working on. Within nine months William took his G-tube out and chose to throw it away. He is now a healthy, happy first grader. William received an award in kindergarten for being the best eater. William stated he would like to return to the feeding program at CHOC to show everyone how he is able eat *anything*- even a cheeseburger!

Sincerely,


Brian and Kristen [REDACTED]