

Today, October 18, 2021, our hearts are full of great joy as we celebrate our son's 2nd birthday. All day, Oakley giddily said, "Happy Birthday to me!" and later stuffed birthday cake into his now chubby face. One short year ago, this was not the picture of health and happiness you would have seen.

As a newborn, Oakley was healthy and very content. Around 6 weeks of age, he had gotten sick with fever, vomiting and diarrhea. At that time, we supposed it to be either a virus or the result of a slight change in diet. (I had just had back surgery due to a herniated disc during pregnancy.) We assumed his body was in shock at the sudden disappearance of pain meds in his diet. As we later learned – that was strictly coincidence.

Weeks and months followed with routine sickness every 2 or 3 weeks. Oakley was listless, had high fevers, diarrhea, an itchy rash and vomited after any intake. This of course resulted in VERY little sleep for me as his mom. Multiple doctor visits, various medications and an ER visit resulted in nothing more than total frustration and lack of answers from medical professionals. The longer it went, the more run-down his body became. He failed to gain much weight and his complexion was gaunt and white.

We celebrated Oakley's 1st birthday with him not eating a thing and only wanting to be held. And as his mom, I knew yet another bout of sickness was starting once again. Oh, the dread that filled each of us. This scary sickness was not something that would be over in 24 hours. No, it would last at least 7-10 days. Only to reoccur again in several weeks.



*The Zimmerman Family*

This time was a bit different though. Just that morning, we had met with Dr. Meier at the Clinic for Special Children. Our visit there was an answer straight from God, especially when Dr Meier said "what Oakley has is 1 of 2 things. We can help him!" I will not forget the relief we felt that day! Maybe ER visits, local doctor visits, etc. would be history.

The difference between his health during his first year and second year is like night and day. If your local doctors are struggling to find answers for you or someone you love, we highly recommend the Clinic. Dr. Meier has spent endless amounts of time researching Mevalonate Kinase Deficiency (aka MKD), a genetic autoinflammatory disease, and has come up with a treatment plan for Oakley. We are grateful to God and to the Clinic that Oakley rarely gets bouts of this sickness anymore.

Let's pull together as a community and support the Clinic so that they can continue to help lives around the world. Your contribution, whether great or small, will help make a difference in the lives of others. May God bless you richly for your sharing.

*Martha, Malvern, Teigen, and Oakley Zimmerman*

