

Sam's DDH Story:



Jemma was diagnosed late at age 1. Her birth was normal, she sat, rolled and crawled meeting all milestones on time and "passed" all baby checks. Around age 1, I discussed her wobbly walk with a close friend who had concerns too. We also noticed she would fall down a lot for no particular reason. So one Thursday off to GP we went; the following Thursday she was in a cast. It all happened very fast; we had never heard of DDH until her diagnosis. The GP sent her for X-rays, and the specialist had a cancellation so we got straight in to see Dr Bellemore at Westmead children's hospital, Sydney. Jem was our second girl so the Doc sent our eldest (3 yo) for X-rays; thankfully it showed she has healthy hips.

Jem had a closed reduction, cast change at 6 weeks with total time in the cast 12 weeks. After the cast came off, Jem was put in a Dennis Browne Bar full time with one hour out a day. The brace did not stop her one little bit and she learned to walk and toilet train in it. Oh the stares she would receive, when sumo brace walking around the shops; we were so proud!

Just before her 2nd birthday she was allowed to be out of the brace. Her hips were stable but her hip cups were still too shallow and she would need a hip op to correct this. However, Jem had developed Avascular Necrosis (AVN) and the Doc wanted to give this time to hopefully correct.

Feb 2014, just before her 4th birthday, Jem was prepped to have both hips operated on (pelvic osteotomy), 2 weeks apart. We discussed hospitals, looked



at photos of kids in casts, and read the Hope the Hip Hippo book. We even raised money to donate more books to Dr Bellemore's office, for newly diagnosed families.

Having a 4 year old in a cast was very different to having a bub in one. She was very heavy. We found putting up a visual aid to count down the 8 weeks in the cast helped the whole family. We made paper snowflakes, (yep Frozen movie obsessed child), and each morning we would take one down. We made a Spica table and scooter board to help Jem do day to day activities.



After the cast removal it took Jem 2 weeks to get back to walking. Her legs were skinny, red and dry but after some love, care and lotion (that only she was allowed to rub in) they returned to normal.

DDH journeys can be long. We found family, friends and computer networks are a must. Take help when offered even if it's a cooked meal. Vent and seek advice from mums and dads on the net; they have been through it and they know how you feel.

Jem is very proud of her scares and loves educating others about her hips. Next check up is at age 10. Fingers crossed until then.

Written April 2015.