

## Carter's Walking!!!

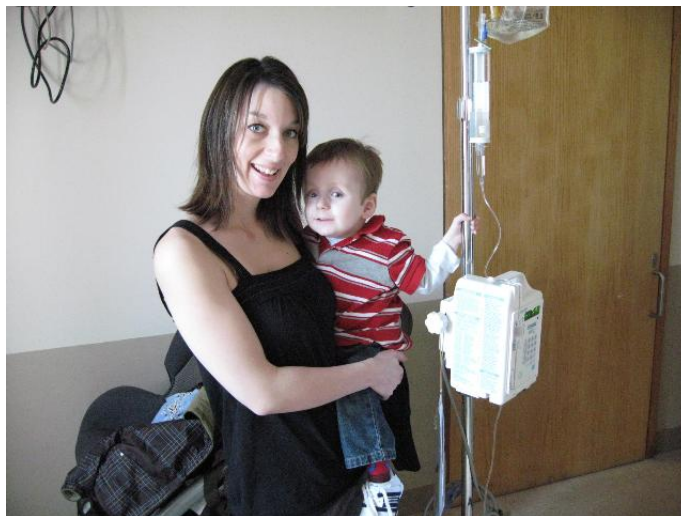
About two weeks before we were set to go to Montreal, we got a call from the hospital. Dr. Fassier wanted to see x-rays of Carter's leg and hip before we made the big trip out. If Dr. Fassier didn't feel that Carter had completely healed, we would have to wait a few more weeks to go out there for his Aredia. With the wonderful technology of digital x-ray here in Estevan, we were able to e-mail the pictures and have a reply from Dr. Fassier the next day. He felt that Carter had healed quite well and would be ready for treatment when we were scheduled.



We had a great trip to Montreal, especially since the weather cooperated this time! Carter's treatment started on Monday, March 16 and when we got there we found out that the procedure had changed quite a bit. He had to get his bone density scan done first thing that day before he could even get poked for his IV. The doctor then checked the bone density numbers before treatment could begin. We found out that Carter's bone density had decreased by 14% while he had been in his cast. It was expected that it would go down and he was still at a decent level so nobody got too worried.



Carter is so used to having his IV now that he hauls around his pole, Like it's an old pal. You could often hear him saying, "C'mon, Pole!". He wanted to push it everywhere we went and was a little sad When they would take it away at the end of every day. Since it had been so long since Carter had his Aredia treatment, he was seeming tired a lot of the time. It didn't take very long before his energy levels went back up.



When we were at the hospital in February, Carter had drawn a picture for the Shriner's Patient Art Show. The display went up while we were there this time and Carter was part of the artist's reception. He was excited to see his picture on the wall and he got a lot of comments from the staff about his beautiful artwork!



We saw Dr. Fassier on this trip to set up Carter's next surgery for rodding his right femur. After Dr. Fassier had examined Carter's left leg and hip to make sure they were functioning properly after surgery, he moved on to his right leg. He was actually very happy with the way it looked in person

and did not feel that it would require surgery at this time. We were quite surprised, but happy that Carter wouldn't be having surgery again so soon. We were scared of Carter putting too much pressure on that leg with the little bend in the femur. Dr. Fassier wasn't too worried about it, especially since it hasn't broken since birth. He did say that it might not break for a few years or it could break next week if something happened, but there's no way of knowing. It is not such a high risk of fracture though to warrant surgery so we will trust the expert on this one. He did order Carter long leg braces that will provide support while he is standing and protect the right femur from getting worse. The other big surprise was that he ordered a little walker for Carter! The long leg braces and walker are usually the course of treatment after the rodding surgeries so he was moving ahead with the plan even without the right leg rodded. Later that afternoon, both of Carter's legs were casted to make molds for his new braces. The braces usually take a few weeks to make, but they were going to put his on the fast track and have them ready by the end of the week. This meant that we had to stay two extra days, but it was definitely worth it!

Carter was very brave on this trip and never even cried when Lucy took out his IV. His treatment went smoothly and he now gets a higher dose of the drug since he is older and has been stretched out to 12 week intervals instead of 8.



Carter's physiotherapist, Stephanie, had just ordered a walker for him, but it wouldn't arrive until after we were at home. This was a little disappointing since we wouldn't get any training from her. After the rodding surgeries, a patient usually receives a week of physio with their long leg braces and walker, but Dr. Fassier's recommendations were so unexpected for all of us that nobody was prepared. However, Stephanie managed to round up a used walker that had just been returned to the hospital that was the perfect size for Carter. She is letting us use it until we return to the hospital in June and can pick up Carter's walker. Since Stephanie wasn't going to be working the day Carter got his new braces, she stood him up with the walker while he was wearing the smaller braces he already had. Before we knew it, Carter had taken one step and then another and then another!! He was walking!! Stephanie provided a lot of support for him and nudged each leg when it was time to shift his weight over and move the other leg. It was amazing to watch our little boy walking and looking so proud of himself.



There was a table set up with toys in front of Carter so he would walk towards it. He kept pushing the table back further and further saying, "More walk". He did not want to stop and that first time he walked the whole length of the playroom without stopping. He had quite a few people watching him and sharing in this special moment. He drank in all the attention and loved every minute of it!



On Friday, we went to pick up his braces and returned to the hospital to have a physio session with another one of the physiotherapists, Rita. Carter has spent some time with her in the past and was comfortable letting her help him. Walking with his long leg braces was very different because the knees are locked so he walked like a little soldier. Dr. Fassier had also asked for a belt around the waist of the braces to support Carter's hips and keep them stable for the first few weeks of walking. We can remove it after that. Carter's favourite nurse, Lucy, came down to the physio room while he was walking and he was more than happy to walk to her every time. She has become so special to us and Carter talks about her all the time, even back at home. At this moment, he is looking at the computer saying, "Oh Mommy, look Sucky!"



As Carter gets stronger in the coming weeks, we will start unlocking one of his knee hinges at a time. There are many steps to this process and we'll go as fast or as slow as Carter is ready for. He loves to walk and we try to get him up and moving with his braces and walker about four times a day. It is quite a production to put his braces on, but Carter is fairly cooperative. When Carter was first diagnosed with his type of OI, we were often told there was no chance he would ever walk. I guess they've never met Carter!