



**Baptist Health
South Florida**

'Miracle Baby' Beats the Odds, Goes Home



Images: (Left) Sonja Taylor holds Amillia at Monday's news conference. (Right) Amillia at birth, slightly larger than a pen.

MIAMI, FL., *February 21, 2007* - Amillia Sonja Taylor, born at 21 weeks and six days, went home today with her parents after four months at Baptist Children's Hospital of Miami neonatal intensive care unit.

Amillia's survival, described by her doctors and parents as miraculous, is considered a new world record for a baby at this gestational age, according to the University of Iowa's national registry for the tiniest babies.

Amillia was scheduled to go home Tuesday, but doctors kept her an extra day as a precaution. Amillia is healthy and thriving, her doctors said, and is well enough to be cared for by parents Eddie and Sonja Taylor at home. On Monday, the baby and her parents were part of a news conference that included the baby's medical team at Baptist Children's Hospital. Amillia's story has drawn worldwide media attention this week.

Amillia was born on Oct. 24, 2006 at Baptist Hospital of Miami. She weighed just under 10 ounces and measured 9.5 inches in length, slightly longer than a ballpoint pen.

"I'm still in amazement," said Amillia's mother at Monday's news conference. "It was hard to imagine she would get this far. But now she is beginning to look like a real baby. Even though she's only four pounds, she looks plump to me."

There is no known baby born at less than 23 weeks that has survived, according to the national registry for the world's tiniest babies maintained by the University of Iowa Health Care's Department of Pediatrics, Division of Neonatology (www.medicine.uiowa.edu/tiniestbabies). Amillia was also the world's fourth smallest baby.

"She's truly a miracle baby," said William Smalling, M.D., neonatologist, Baptist Children's Hospital.

Dr. Smalling and other doctors who helped see Amillia through the past few months said caring for her was like charting new territory.

"We didn't even know what a normal blood pressure is for a baby this small," Dr. Smalling said.

Amillia's parents said faith got them through the last few months with the help of a dedicated team of doctors, nurses and other clinical professionals.

"I put my faith in God," said Amillia's father, Eddie Taylor. I didn't worry a lot. I just made sure to get here to be at her side."

"She had great doctors, nurses, therapists and social workers," the mother said. "The whole team at Baptist Children's Hospital did their all for our baby. Everyone was there to support us, so I knew she was coming home."

Paul Fassbach, M.D., neonatologist, Baptist Children's Hospital, said it's important for expectant parents to know that Amillia's case is exceptional.

"We don't want people to think that we're establishing a new trend," Dr. Fassbach said, "But you never know. Sometimes when many things fall into place, this can happen."

Amillia was delivered via C-section after attempts to delay a premature delivery failed. She was breathing without assistance at birth and even made several attempts to cry. Due to this level of fetal development, doctors believed that she was closer to 23 weeks in gestational age when she was born.

Because Amillia was conceived by in vitro fertilization, it was possible to pinpoint her exact gestational age. Doctors learned that Amillia was in fact a "miracle baby" after reviewing the mother's in vitro fertilization records.

A full-term pregnancy is 37-40 weeks. The American Association of Pediatrics indicates that babies born at less than 23 weeks of age and 400 grams in weight are not considered viable. The mortality rate for infants born at 23 weeks is 70 percent, according to the National Institutes of Health.

About 500,000 infants are born prematurely each year. More than 350 babies are cared for each year in the NICU at Baptist Children's Hospital.

"It may be that we need to reconsider our standard for viability in light of Amillia's case," said Dr. Smalling. "Over the years, the technology that we have available to save these premature babies has improved dramatically. Today, we can save babies that would have never survived 10 years ago."

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