Parents of little girl whose heart was restarted on fundraising mission for charity

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The parents of a little girl whose heart was restarted at just a few weeks old are fastening their running shoes to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust and CHUF, two charities that helped them throughout their ordeal.

At just a few days old, little Holly Hutchinson developed a temperature and was diagnosed with viral meningitis. Discharged home after 48 hours as no treatment was required, the tot's condition rapidly deteriorated and she became life-threateningly ill. At Sunderland Royal Hospital, Holly's heart rate climbed to 320 beats per minute in an abnormal rhythm caused by an infection in her heart. Doctors had to try and shock Holly's heart into the correct rhythm, resorting to dunking her head into a bucket of ice cold water for five seconds. After multiple attempts to shock her heart with other methods, she was rushed to Newcastle Freeman Hospital where the process was repeated and she was intubated.

Despite the bleak initial outlook, Holly made an incredible recovery spending just ten days at Freeman Hospital before being discharged home. Throughout her treatment in Newcastle, her parents, and older sister Emily, were supported by The Sick Children's Trust which gave them a place to stay at its 'Home from Home' Scott House. **Dad Ian, who is running the Great North Run to raise money for The Sick Children's Trust, said:**

"Right in front of our eyes, we could see the blood retracting from Holly's limbs to try and protect her core, making her go grey. It was absolutely horrendous to see our newborn become so ill, so quickly. Watching her being submerged in the water and be prodded with needles like a pin cushion is something no parent wants to see. It was so hard knowing there was nothing we could do.

"When we arrived at Freeman Hospital we were taken into a side room and left there while they tried to save Holly's life. We felt like we were there for an age, but we knew she was in the best possible place. Holly is a little legend, and she started to fight back after they shocked her heart and various other procedures. It was only ten minutes until midnight on New Year's Eve when we received the news that her heart had gone back into its normal rhythm and was stable. Suddenly fireworks were going off and people were cheering – it was surreal. If we'd arrived 20 minutes later, Holly might not be here today.

"We spent a couple of hours with our baby, who was unrecognisable and covered in wires and tubes. It was the early hours when a nurse popped in and said we needed to get some rest and told us about The Sick Children's Trust. She handed us keys to Scott House, which was a short walk away. It was such a relief knowing we didn't have to drive home, we could stay as close as possible to Holly. We unlocked the door and found our own private room. We needed to be together that night after what had happened and what could've happened, The Sick Children's Trust made that possible."

The Sick Children's Trust supported Ian, Jen and their eldest daughter, Emily, while Holly recovered at Freeman Hospital. With direct phone access to the wards from their room, the couple were able to get a peaceful night's sleep while being safe in the knowledge they were only minutes from Holly's side. **Ian added:**

"It's completely underappreciated how important it is to be together as a family when your child's in hospital. Being with Emily and Jen made such a difference, it kept me sane. The Sick Children's Trust takes away the stress of being separated so you don't have to worry about it. You can just focus on getting your child home.

"The Sick Children's Trust relies entirely on voluntary donations to run its 'Homes from Home' and give families, like ours, a place to stay. Jen and I are so grateful to the charity for keeping us together that I wanted to do something for them. It costs them £30 to support a family for one night, so I'm aiming to raise £500 which I've already exceeded!

"We're up to nine miles in our training and it's tough. But if Holly can hold on with a heartbeat of 320, a half marathon should be pretty simple right?"

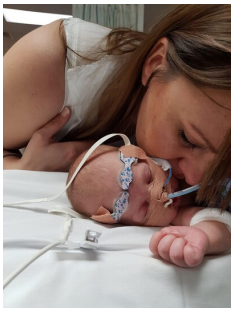
To support Ian in his fundraising, visit: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ian-hutchinson35

For further information about The Sick Children's Trust, please visit sickchildrenstrust.org

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