MIRACLE

FROM PAGE A1

Their delight was turned into devastation just weeks later when Chelsea's water broke at 17 weeks pregnant. Because a fetus isn't considered able to live outside of the womb until 22 weeks gestation, she was given no intervention and little hope that her baby would survive. And, although the outlook was bleak, she did not allow the statistics to deter her determination: instead, she put herself on bed rest and insisted on antibiotics to reduce her possibility of infection.

By following these steps, Chelsea was able to beat the odds and continue carrying her pregnancy. She was admitted to Norton Children's Hospital the day before she reached 22 weeks pregnant, when her baby was officially viable.

Roughly two weeks later, Myla was born at 24 weeks and 4 days gestation on July 1, 2023; she weighed 1 pound, 7.3 ounces and was 11.4 inches long. She was immediately taken under the care of Norton's NICU (neonatal intensive care unit).

Although she was stable for the first few days of her life, Myla faced her first obstacle at just six days old: sepsis — a life-threatening infection of the blood — and a perforated bowel. Unfortunately, these were only the beginning of the challenges that Myla would soon confront.

"The first month is like a blur because it seemed like every day we were getting some kind of bad news," Chelsea said.



This picture was taken near the beginning of Myla's 129-day stay in Norton Children's Hospital's NICU. She was born at 1 pound, 7.3 ounces and 11.4 inches long on July 1, 2023.

Myla's father, Brad-

split his time between

working to provide for

the family, visiting the

hospital and spending

time with their children

Getting through this

time wouldn't have

been possible with-

out the support they

received from every

avenue around them,

includes not only the

doctors, nurse prac-

titioners, nurses and

other staff at Norton's

who worked extensive-

ly to ensure Myla lived

"The community ral-

lied around us. Online

and local, we had peo-

ple praying for her. It

"I know those prayers

got us through some

and I don't know how

to thank everyone. You

cards, and you send out

of the hardest days,

send out thank you

personal thank you's

and you call people up

and say thank you, but

there's just no thanks

129 days after her

birth, Myla was finally

discharged from the

that can encompass

everything."

was amazing," she said.

and thrived, but also

the local community.

Chelsea said. This

ley, was forced to

at home.

"At one point, we had a doctor tell us, 'We're doing everything we can do, and we don't have many options left.'

"I can't even think back to how sick she was without getting physically nauseous myself," she said. "She was so acidotic - her blood was so acidic from her illness — that she was brown. I mean, she was dying.'

In addition to the sepsis and perforated bowel, which eventually required major abdominal surgery, she also battled breathing issues from underdeveloped lungs, brain bleeding and heart conditions. Despite the grim circumstances, though, Myla proved her resilience time and time again, fighting each obstacle as it arose.

While the time in the NICU was a constant fight for Myla, it was also a challenging time for her family. Chelsea stayed by her daughter's side nearly 24/7, only leaving for the occasional visit with her other three children, who could not enter the NICU due to their age.



were critical, Myla's health eventually stabilized. She is pictured smiling around the halfway point of her NICU stay.

NICU. In the weeks, months and year following, she has continued to see multiple specialists as she continues to develop.

One challenge she has had to battle through is her compromised immune system, which means even the common cold can end in her hospitalization. She also experiences hypermobile joints in her ankles, which necessitates braces for stability; an eye disease, which needed laser surgery and requires her to wear glasses; and an oral aversion due to her prolonged need for intubation and other non-direct feeding methods, though this is

decreasing over time. No matter the setback or obstacle, Myla



Now 1 ½ years old, Myla is a curious toddler who loves to talk and explore and is on the cusp of walking.

continues to prove her resilience by conquering each hurdle as they occur. And now, almost 1 ½ years later, she is a thriving, happy toddler who loves to talk and explore, and is on the cusp of walking.

"She's surpassed every odd that was stacked against her," Chelsea said. "I'm so proud of her and I'm thankful to God and I'm thankful to the medical personnel that he put in our lives to get her where she is today... She's definitely a miracle baby."

Stating that Myla wouldn't be on this Earth if it wasn't for Norton's, Chelsea is passionate about finding ways to give back to the hospital. She is currently running a fundraiser to raise \$10,000

for the NICU that saved her daughter's life and other families that are going through what hers did; the benefit can be found on the "Miracles for Myla" social media page, and all funds are paid directly to the hospital. She hopes to reach the goal by October, when Myla will celebrate her second adjusted birthday.

"Norton Children's can use it for a lot of different things — they need equipment, they need rocking chairs, they need things for the families that stay there with their kids," Chelsea said. "They have all kinds of resources ... and they are so incredible, so I'd like to give back to them or encourage people to give to them.'

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

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