

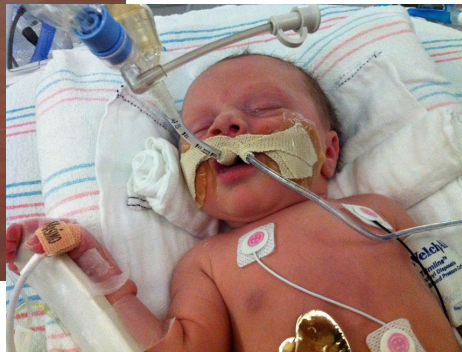
# Elijah

*Written by his Mother, Brenda*

During my gender ultrasound, my son was diagnosed with Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia. His heart was in the wrong place and he had a hole in his diaphragm. Doctors initially predicted a 50% chance of survival, then 90% later. Four days after his birth he had surgery and the doctors found that he also had his spleen, stomach, and small intestines were in his chest.

That was fixed, but now he has 75% of his left lung and the patch on his diaphragm will be monitored over the next few years as he grows.

There is always a possibility of reherniation, hospitalization, and lots of doctors visits.



## ELIJAH

"Elijah Mertes is a 3 year old survivor of life-threatening birth defect, Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia. He was born with a hole in his diaphragm that allowed for his abdominal organs to move into his chest cavity. This hindered lung growth and pushed his heart over. He had repair surgery at four days old in which a surgeon put a Gor-tex patch over the hole and put his organs back into place. He was fortunate to survive this, since only 50% of those diagnosed survive. Every few months he sees a team of specialists at a children's hospital to make sure that the patch is still in place and to monitor respiratory issues that he has. The blood flow to his left lung is only at 33% and his right lung is doing most of the function for his left lung. This does not slow him down though and he starts baseball in January 2019! As his family, we hope to see more of a survival rate with this defect and more research that finds the cause as well as a cure."

**Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia**