Kimber McGinley
Valentine, Nebraska

"On Monday night, July 14, 2008 we noticed a lump in Kimber's abdomen when we were changing her diaper. She turned 19 months old on the 15th."

Kimber's mother, Jessica, **a regular donor at the Rotary Sponsored Blood Drives in Valentine, Nebraska,** wrote on the blog of the website, carepages.com, a site that "connects family and friends during a health challenge."

After taking her to the clinic, Kimber had a CT scan that showed a tumor in her abdomen that was dangerous close to her spine. Her parents were told to take her to Children's Hospital in Omaha where the doctors confirmed a large tumor attached to the main artery and vein going to the lower body. Because of the size and location, the doctors thought they would need to shrink the tumor with chemotherapy before it could be removed. At the outset, the doctors thought it was a stage 3 cancer. According to her parents, Kimber remained happy and healthy seeming through all of this and had little discomfort.

The follow week, on July 21, Kimber was taken to the hospital to prepare for the biopsy. When they started surgery, the surgeon first attached a "port" in her chest to get blood samples and give medicine and fluids. After he began to examine the tumor the surgeon talked to the family and told them he thought the mass was not as attached as they previously believed. He wanted to know if he could just try to take it all out instead of only a biopsy.

We said "Absolutely!"

It took a while for him to remove the mass. Originally he thought it would only take 1 1/2 to 2hrs to do the port, biopsy, and bone marrow. I think it was about four and 3/4 hours when he came out and showed us some pictures and told us that he got the whole mass. They don't try to get microscopic pieces out, but he thought that the mass was pretty self contained and he got the mass itself out. He had to peel/scrape it off of a couple things it was touching as well…

He said everything else looked healthy and was growing normally even though the tumor was in there. They left the port in and took some bone marrow and will test it. With the mass gone now, it will significantly lower the amount of chemotherapy she needs and we are HOPEFUL now for no chemo! We will have to follow CT scans to make sure there is

> *no mass growing back. The tumor was favorable and mature. That is good. If it was immature, it would be aggressive, but he felt that it was mature and stable.*

The next morning the family reported that Kimber was pretty tired and uncomfortable during the night. **She lost about 180-200ml of blood, so they did a transfusion in the night giving her back 200ml of blood.** The reported that Kimber was pretty warm most of the night also, which is normal. They also said they didn't think she was really in pain, just uncomfortable with the waking up, the incisions, the cords, the low fever, having to be still, etc.

The second day after surgery, Kimber was tired of being in her room so she and her family went to the play room where they have lots of toys and books for the patients. She was excited to play with the toys. Reports were that the family had a hard time following behind her with the IV pole.

The next report was posted on July 25 and started with *"It's all great news*!"

Kimber did have a tumor (a little bigger than a softball); it was a neuroblastoma, it was cancerous but it was a stage 1 tumor not a stage 3 like they thought. They took it all out, her bones were reported to be good and healthy, she did not need further treatment, no chemotherapy, no radiation, just a couple more CT scans to follow up and make sure that it is not growing back or there is another one. They were told that she only has a 10%-15% chance of it coming back.

With Kimber's port still implanted in her chest, for any further treatment that might be necessary, she was dismissed from the hospital to go home to Valentine for a month.

> *"We went down there with a little girl with a terminal illness thinking we would live there for the next 2 years and within a week we are back home and we believe her body is cancer free!"*

Kimber made periodic trips back to Omaha throughout the summer, fall and winter for CT scans and other tests. The results have been great. As of the latest report, they see NO signs of cancer or a tumor! The port will be kept in until the CT scans are all done or as long as the port is working. This makes it easier to give her medicines without have to stick Kimber when she needs blood drawn or contrast fluid injected into her veins. If the port is out, she would have had to held down and an IV started each time.

Although only one unit of blood was needed during this procedure, the energy provided by the transfusion was a vital part of the process of Kimber's recovery.

Quotes: http://www.carepages.com/carepages/kimberlydia