

When I was four months pregnant, we were sent to have a level two ultrasound. The ultrasound was ordered due to a few indicators on our initial scan, which suggested our baby might have Down syndrome. I remember my aunt telling me over the phone to trust what I knew in my heart, that the baby was healthy and everything would be fine. However, in actuality, I felt in my heart that there was something wrong.



Isaac at birth

My husband and I weren't sure of how to prepare ourselves for the day of the ultrasound. Although we felt it was unlikely that our baby had Down syndrome since we were so young and there was no family history, we knew it was possible we could receive devastating news. As they examined the baby's face, instead of confirming Down syndrome, the cleft was discovered. An overwhelming feeling of relief came over me, even as they explained the extent of the cleft, which was right side unilateral and involving the alveolar ridge. Even with multiple subsequent 4D ultrasounds further into my pregnancy, they remained uncertain of whether the cleft extended onto the palate. We would have to wait until the birth to know.

Immediately after being told about the cleft, my husband, who was a fourth year dental student, explained the gravity of what I thought was a simple birth defect. He recited the possibilities, in the case of a cleft palate, of difficult feeding, speech therapy,

psychologists to help with social issues, and of course the many surgeries. I was in shock. I had seen people with clefts before, and just assumed it was a simple thing to stitch up, with no other complications. At that moment I began to feel responsible, wondering if I had done something to cause this, or if there was something genetically responsible for the cleft. Both of us began to search for answers why, out of all the multitudes of people who have children, we were given this challenge.

On December 15, 2007, Isaac Robert Madson came into the world weighing 7 pounds13 ounces and measuring 20 and a half inches in length. His cleft was mild, the palate intact, and he was otherwise very healthy. He began to nurse without hesitation, and would continue to gain weight nicely. Isaac had



Isaac after his cleft lip repair

his lip repair when he was two months old, and the results were marvelous. He will have a bone graft to repair the alveolar cleft around age six, and will also need a lip revision when he is a teenager. Prior to the surgery, with much prayer and reflection, we defined a sense of purpose for our son's

cleft. Before we became pregnant, my husband had often expressed interest in the field of oral maxillofacial surgery. What divine intervention, that God should give us a son with this particular birth defect! We continue to feel it was a push from God to steer my husband to the career path on which he is meant to embark.

Throughout this experience we have come to fathom such a deeper of meaning of Isaac's life and our own. His extraordinary personality and resilience has taught us so much about ourselves as people and as parents. He is a miracle.



Isaac at six months