

Baby born 4 months early is now a healthy 2-year-old

NUH neonatal team that cared for her during 13-month hospital stay receives award

Goh Yan Han

Like many two-year-olds, Kwek Yu Xuan sees home as a bit of a playground. She loves moving a

plastic chair around and likes to stand on a bench at the window, hang on to the grilles and slide the glass panels for ages.

But Yu Xuan is not the usual two-year-old – she was born four months premature in June 2020,

weighing 212g. Newborns normally weigh between 2.5kg and 3.5kg.

She required a 13-month stay at the National University Hospital (NUH), where she battled against the odds before being discharged in July last year, weighing 6.3kg.

At that point, she still had to cope with chronic lung disease – a condition associated with extreme prematurity – and had to use a ventilator at home for oxygen assistance.



Madam Wong Mei Ling with her husband Kwek Wee Liang and their children – a five-year-old boy and two-year-old daughter Yu Xuan, who weighed only 212g at birth. PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE KWEK FAMILY

She no longer requires the ventilator, and is a mostly healthy and happy child, requiring only a feeding tube through her nose for milk, said her mother, Madam Wong Mei Ling. Yu Xuan now weighs 10.2kg, close to the normal weight of those her age.

Madam Wong and her technician husband Kwek Wee Liang, both 36, are Singapore permanent residents who moved back to

Johor in January. They also have a five-year-old son.

They continue to keep in touch with the NUH care team and return for regular follow-up treatment at the hospital. “The NUH care team is very nice and professional. I really respect them,” said Madam Wong, a housewife.

Dr Yvonne Ng, a senior consultant at the department of neonatology at NUH’s Khoo Teck Puat –

National University Children’s Medical Institute, said her team follows up with the baby’s growth and development as well as with the parents on how to cope with caring for her at home.

Dr Ng and the other members of the premature baby care team at NUH were recipients of the Team Award yesterday at the National University Health System Tribute Awards Ceremony 2022.

A total of 80 awards were presented at the ceremony held at Capella Singapore in Sentosa.

Health Minister Ong Ye Kung, who was guest of honour, lauded the efforts of the neonatal team.

“While Yu Xuan’s chances of survival were low, the neonatal team cared for her round the clock, including with new innovative ways. They improvised feeding tubes, re-fashioned diapers for her small frame and took special care of her fragile skin to minimise infections,” he said.

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