

# Ryleigh

Ryleigh is a 21 month old who has been battling Infant Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia since she was 9 ½ months old. Ryleigh has the biggest heart and is always smiling and happy, despite all the intense treatment she has been through. She is very socialized from her long hospital stays and therefore loves to wave and blow kisses to everyone she encounters. She was born a healthy baby and by 9 months was crawling and loved going to swim lessons. One day Ryleigh woke up with a strange bruise on her forehead. A visit to the pediatrician to investigate turned into a trip to the emergency room. A blood test revealed her family's worst fear that Ryleigh had leukemia. Further genetic testing on the cancer cells showed infant leukemia markers, which is biologically different from childhood leukemia. Infant leukemia is much more difficult to treat and requires long hospital stays. Her family knew they were ready to fight and would never give up.

The initial emergency room visit turned into an admission to the ICU and a 45 day inpatient hospital stay where Ryleigh received an intense regimen of chemotherapy drugs. The family spent another 35 days in the hospital while Ryleigh received an immunotherapy drug, which unfortunately did not work. She relapsed and the cancer returned. She was readmitted for another month-long hospital stay and it was soon determined that she needed a bone marrow transplant to save her life.

Following this, Ryleigh had to have six sessions of total body radiation followed by intense chemotherapy to prepare her body for a transplant. Ryleigh's brave older sister, Whitney donated her bone marrow to Ryleigh! In all, she spent a total of 214 days away from home in treatment.

Today Ryleigh is in remission and finally back home where her family enjoys every moment together. Ryleigh is slowly returning to her old self and is developing and growing at a fast pace again! She has regained most of her strength and is almost walking and loves being at home, reunited and playing with her sisters

On behalf of A Special Wish Chicago, THANK YOU!

