



NEONATOLOGY

Three's Company



Last January, Susan Yu-Eng delivered 25-week-old triplets at the Regional Perinatal Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ).

Shown: Triplets Kieran Allen Eng, Grayson Logan Eng and Colton Banner Eng were delivered safely at 25 weeks and spent three months in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ). The advanced care and multi-specialty support available only at a Regional Perinatal Center like RWJ is what has the nearly one-year-olds thriving today.

As they prepared for delivery, Mrs. Yu-Eng and her husband David Eng were mindful of the odds against the babies they had struggled to conceive and fought to bring close to term.

With strong support from the medical team – including the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine (MFM) at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical Group, the hospital's Labor & Delivery and Maternity Services, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital (BMSCH) at RWJ – the couple maintained faith that the family's journey wouldn't end that day.

"I was panicked. At 25 weeks, the babies' chance of survival still wasn't great and babies that do survive could have a chronic illness," Mrs. Yu-Eng remembered. "RWJ saved our kids."

Looking at Colton Banner, Grayson Logan and Kieran Allen Eng nearly a year later, it's hard to believe that each infant weighed less than two pounds and measured just 12 inches at birth. The Eng's "superhero" babies spent three months in the NICU before going home. Their youngest, Kieran, additionally spent several weeks in rehabilitation at Children's Specialized Hospital before being sent home in July.

Their journey was never easy. The Eng's married in 2010 and soon tried to expand their family. They experienced a couple of miscarriages and two failed in vitro fertilization (IVF) attempts. With expert

medical care from Reproductive Medicine Associates of New Jersey, they gave IVF one last try. They were successful; in fact, one of two embryos implanted split and Mrs. Yu-Eng was pregnant with triplets.

Todd Rosen, MD, Chief of the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, provided care throughout Mrs. Yu-Eng's pregnancy. It was uneventful, until 23 weeks. During a routine ultrasound, the technician noticed Mrs. Eng was having contractions. She didn't feel them and had no idea she had started to dilate. As a result, Mrs. Yu-Eng was admitted to RWJ and delivery seemed imminent. Fortunately, her contractions were stopped. She stayed at RWJ for a week then was discharged to spend New Year's Day at home. She continued to rest at home until January 7th, when once again, contractions started and sent her back to RWJ.

Then, at 25 weeks, her boys were delivered via emergency caesarean section. The couple was impressed by the choreographed response in the delivery room, where each baby had a dedicated team consisting of a physician, nurses, and a respiratory therapist ready at his cart. Colton arrived first and Grayson was next. Kieran joined them three minutes later. All three immediately went to the NICU.

"At first you're just happy that they're breathing and moving, but then there's 'What now?'" Mr. Eng recalled. "All we could do then was put our trust in the doctors, the nurses and everyone who'd care for them. It was very

apparent that they love and care for these babies like they would their own kids."

Thomas Hegyi, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, said the boys were born with issues common in premature babies, including respiratory distress syndrome and feeding intolerance, and they were at risk for chronic heart and brain conditions. "The beauty of our field is that time is on our side. As babies grow and mature, the diseases, although they may take a while to resolve, will resolve," he said.

The Eng are grateful to the entire NICU team, especially their nurses, who explained the medical jargon and provided hands-on instruction on how to properly use and monitor equipment to continue care at home.

David Sorrentino, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Medical Director of the NICU at BMSCH commends the team's family-centered approach. "NICU stays can be incredibly traumatic for parents. We recognize that stress, and while we get even better at infant care, we're also expanding the scope of care to improving communication with parents. They're an essential part of the equation," he said.

The triplets continue to see specialists – a gastroenterologist, an ophthalmologist, a cardiologist and a urologist, to name a few –



Shown: David Sorrentino, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Medical Director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at The Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital (BMSCH) at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, led the comprehensive team of physicians, nurses and staff who took part in caring for Colton, Grayson and Kieran Eng when they arrived at just 25 weeks old.

but Mrs. Yu-Eng feels like the biggest hurdles are over. "It can be tough, but we couldn't imagine not having them here," she said.

"We thank RWJ for that."

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