



## MEET DEAN

Hello, my name is Dean and I am 3 months old. I was born with Ornithine Transcarbamylase Deficiency (OTC) - a rare metabolic disorder. OTC is one of the urea-cycle disorders. The urea cycle is a series of five liver enzymes that help rid the body of ammonia, a toxic breakdown product of protein. When one of these enzymes is missing or deficient, ammonia accumulates in the blood and travels to the brain. If not treated properly, this deficiency can cause me to go into a coma, brain damage or even death.

OTC deficiency is the most common of the urea-cycle disorders, occurring in one out of every 40,000 births. The genetic mutation responsible for OTC occurs on the X chromosome, so women are typically carriers, while their sons with the gene suffer the disease. The only solution for fixing the disease is a liver transplant – replace my dysfunctional liver with a healthy one. I am currently listed on the National Transplant Network and I am praying every day that one comes available.

Considering, I am a very lucky little boy. My parents love me very much. I have three siblings: Asa (8 years old), Belle (7 years old) and Caylee (6 years old). Unfortunately I am not allowed to live with them. You see, my family lives in Fresno, California and I am living with my mother at the Ronald MacDonald House in Palo Alto, California. I need to be close to the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in case my ammonia levels get too high. My mom and I need to be within 30 minutes from the hospital. The distance between Fresno and Palo Alto is 150 miles – about 3 hours drive. My siblings are in school and my Dad is taking care of the family. My Mom quit her job so she can be with me full-time. Just recently, my Dad lost his job due to the State of California cutbacks. He is actively looking for a job but with the high unemployment rate, it has been difficult.

I know my situation it is not easy on my family. My parents are struggling to pay for the basic living expenses. They are falling behind on bills, wondering if they should buy food, pay medical or deal with the numerous bills. Additionally, there are extra costs because my Mom and I live so far away from the family.

My parents are good people and are the type to try to do things themselves. However, considering this situation, they are looking for a little help so they can get back on their feet. I know they would appreciate any assistance and will never forget the kindness.

Thank you so very much for your time.