

Meet Our Hero: Tobin Haas

Child's condition: Brain tumour

Birthday: November 25, 1999

"SickKids means we have our son. We know we are in the best hands in the world. I can't imagine being anywhere else, and I want people to know there is so much hope, even when you think the worst has happened. SickKids helped to give us that hope."

- Karen Haas

In the spring of 2002, Karen Haas noticed her two-year-old son Tobin, was becoming more and more lethargic. He was having problems walking straight and was vomiting occasionally in the mornings. She took Tobin to their family doctor who sent them to their local hospital for further testing.

A CT scan showed a mass on Tobin's brain and he was immediately transferred to The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) for specialized care.

Karen and her husband, Frank, were told that Tobin had a brain tumour. Until they heard those words, Tobin's parents had yet to realize that he was critically ill.

The next day, Tobin had an MRI which was followed immediately by surgery to remove the tumour. It had grown to the size of a baseball in his brain. The neurosurgeon successfully removed 80 per cent of Tobin's tumour, and a combination of chemotherapy and radiation was used to reduce the risk of the remaining cancerous cells. His treatment involved Stereotactic Interstitial Irradiation, a new type of therapy available only at SickKids at the time.

Tobin was doing well after surgery but in 2005, the tumour grew back, doctors scheduled a second surgery and removed 98 per cent of the tumour. Tobin had 18 cycles of chemotherapy over the next year and a half, but once again he bounced back and resumed all his regular activities, school, baseball and even hockey.

Then in June 2009, a routine MRI showed that the tumour had grown again. Surgery was once again scheduled and the tumour was completely removed. The family was devastated to learn that the cancer had spread down to Tobin's spine. He once again required radiation which lasted throughout September and October 2009. During this time, he continued to play baseball competitively

To date, Tobin has had 20 cycles of chemotherapy and 63 radiation treatments and he tackled this latest recurrence with a positive attitude. Throughout his treatment in 2005 and 2009, he continued to play baseball and hockey competitively. He started his eighth year of ball with the Brampton Minor Baseball Incorporated (BMBI). His favourite professional teams are the Blue Jays and the Diamondbacks.

In February 2012, Tobin had surgery at SickKids to replace an area of missing skull. A custom implant was made using precise measurements from a special CT scan and covers the full thickness defect resulting from removal of the bone flap. Because he enjoys many sports, this protection gives his family peace of mind.

