



Will you help make Christmas in hospital better for sick kids?

Dear Reader

It's terrifying to see your Child on the brink of a catastrophic health emergency.

It feels even more cruel when it's Christmas.

That's how it was for Nadia when her youngest son Valentino (known as 'Tino') was rushed to hospital on Christmas Day two years ago.

Nobody wants to be in hospital for Christmas, especially not children.

Will you help make Christmas in hospital better for sick kids? Your kindness in giving a gift of any amount today will help ease the trauma of being away from home and family while having medical treatment.

Tino is 12. His mum says he was a pretty healthy kid until he was about 8 or 9. He enjoyed sport, particularly basketball.

Then everything changed. Within months he was transformed into a pale shell of a child. "He was like a transparent skeleton," says his Mum Nadia. "And he wasn't growing. For a couple of years, he didn't grow at all."

"His body was simply being starved of oxygen. He became so disabled he couldn't even walk 50 metres."

On Christmas Day two years ago, they nearly lost him.

"My husband and I had noticed on Christmas morning that Tino seemed a bit flat," remembers Nadia.

"He roused himself enough after lunch to play a little bit of cricket with family, but he felt unwell, so we brought him home from the oval."

"There was a big thunderstorm approaching, and this may have triggered him. He started to have a really severe asthma attack."

Thankfully Nadia was prepared with an emergency medication kit. She began to give Tino his inhalers while her husband called the ambulance.

But nothing was helping. Tino couldn't get the air out of his lungs, and he went into respiratory arrest. She knew the next stage would be cardiac arrest. Her little boy's heart would stop.

Being Christmas evening, local ambulances in Queanbeyan were busy and it took 15 very long minutes for an ambulance to come from Canberra. Even when the ambulance arrived, all the medics could do was give Tino more of what his mum had already been giving him.

Tino's terrified parents knew that even getting Tino to hospital didn't guarantee he'd make it. Tino's asthma is not typical and standard treatments don't work on him.

"We were terrified," Nadia remembers.

It wasn't the first time this had happened to Tino.

"We've almost lost him a few times," says his Mum.

Tino has several complex medical conditions. One is the unusual form of asthma he has. Another is an allergic immune deficiency.

These days Tino spends a whole day each month receiving preventative treatment. He has three subcutaneous injections of a special, cutting-edge drug for his asthma, and an intravenous infusion of immunoglobulin for his immune system.

It takes hours, but he says he doesn't mind, "because it's better than every week".

"And it's fun," he says. "We play board games and ball and stuff like that the whole time."

That's what you do for children like Tino when you give a Christmas donation. You transform what can be a traumatic, fearful time into something much happier – even fun.

Will you give a special donation this Christmas, and bring joy to another young person like Tino in hospital over the holidays?

It's not just the toys and games – it's a range of comfort items. Previously you have helped to provide items such as special kid friendly kitchen fit outs and wall murals in the paediatric unit specifically fashioned to make them appealing to children.

That's how your gifts help make hospital visits better for children.

These days Tino is doing remarkably well thanks to important medical research that aims to improve treatment options. Your donation will also help to support high impact research in a range of areas across the hospital.

"A year ago, Tino couldn't go outside for 5 minutes without going to hospital," says his Mum.

"Now he's able to play basketball for an hour every week. He can ride his bike and go to school again. He's developing, he's growing and he's strong."

Tino and his mum, Nadia, are very grateful for your generosity. They see far more of the hospital than they would like, but their time there is better, thanks to you, dear donor.

Yours with gratitude

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Helen Falla
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. I hope you enjoy our [downloadable Christmas bookmark](#), featuring artworks by some of the children currently in hospital. I know that times are tougher right now, but if you can spare something to make Christmases better for children in hospital, it really will make hospital better for a young person like Tino.