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This Thanksgiving, it's all OK now

"No," I told my sister when she called, "we're still waiting."

Waiting for the biopsy results on my son. Actually, it seemed like we had been waiting ever since the first diagnosis of a rare skin condition some eight months ago.

The rash started with one smallish spot on the back of our 18-month-old baby boy and quickly proceeded to cover his torso. It was supposedly a viral rash (not contagious) that would go away shortly on its own. But it didn't.

The first visit with the dermatologist confirmed it was an unusually severe case in an infant, but "just a rash" nonetheless. Yet, it was unusual enough that he took pictures for the class that he teaches. We were given some cream and told that, at the very most, it would last 16 weeks.

So we waited patiently. Sixteen weeks came and went but the rash did not. As some bumps disappeared, others appeared.

At eight months, the rash was mostly gone, and we were told the scars on his little body would fade. But a small rash persisted. New bumps appeared in his armpits and along his upper legs.

This, I could tell, was worrying the doctor as it had worried my husband and me. That is when the doctor decided he wanted to schedule



a biopsy — to rule out a rare type of cancer.

I was fine holding my son's hand while my husband held his other one. Two nurses held his legs down and apart. I hummed a song I've sung to him (a silly one I made up) since we first brought him home from the hospital, and I kept telling him it would be OK. He just kept saying "ow, ow, ow."

The doctor assured us that Charlie was feeling only pressure, no pain as he sliced out

one of the bumps and put a stitch in his leg. It was only afterward that I started to cry.

That day, I spoke to my dad on the phone and he said, in his fatherly voice (the one which I knew I'd better pay attention to), "Don't you borrow trouble, Cheryl! Your son will be just fine." I really needed to hear that, in spite of my father's lack of medical credentials.

As the days passed, I prayed often, "Please, God, not my little boy." Charlie seemed to be aware of things in his own way. He regularly pointed down to the Band-Aid on his leg and said "boo-boo doctor" and then "OK soon?" I told him, "OK soon, Charlie. It will all be OK soon."

Eight days after the biopsy, I was rocking my son to sleep for his nap. The phone rang. It was the doctor calling. The wait was over, and the news was good. "OK soon" was finally here. "OK soon" was finally now.

On past Thanksgivings, I have suggested that everyone say what he or she is thankful for (this is usually met with a lot of groaning and whispers about me being awfully corny). I suspect this year, though, they will all join me in giving thanks — that the wait is over, the fear is gone, and we are all "OK now."

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