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Alexia's family walks it out

By Melissa Grant

Looking at little Alexia Hanna, you would have no idea she had a rocky start to life.

Alexia was born via an emergency c-section at Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital on October 12 last year, after mum Lisa was forced to call an ambulance.

"Until he (the obstetrician) said 'she's out she's fine', that's when I took my next breath," Lisa, who now resides in Berwick, said.

"I didn't get to hold her. The nurses whisked her away."

Dad Mina missed Alexia's birth. He was working in Melbourne, where the Hannas were preparing to relocate to, when Lisa's placenta ruptured.

Like many first time mums, Lisa thought she would go over her due date and told her husband not to worry about leaving her in Sydney to begin his new job down south.

"I said to him 'I'll probably go over so don't stress'," she said.

"He started in the first week of October, on a Monday. That Wednesday I come home from work and I didn't feel right."

When she began bleeding, Lisa called an ambulance.

Although Mina booked a flight for 6am the following day, it proved too late.

Alexia arrived at 3.34am, weighing 1.89kg.

After enduring a delayed flight and bad traffic, Mina got to the hospital around 10am.

"He was the first to see her. He spent a bit of time with her," Lisa recalled.

"When I was able enough they put me in a wheelchair and they took me to see her.

"It was a bit traumatising ... they (premature babies) have monitors on, oxygen on and a little beanie."

Lisa said she had no idea what having a premature baby entailed.

"The physical and mental strain on a parent - it's a full-time job," she said.

"You're going back to the hospital everyday. For three weeks I was there from 8am to 6pm everyday.

"You have to be there for your kid even though you can't do much."

Alexia has just celebrated her 1st birthday and is meeting all her milestones.

"You don't know she's a preemie baby - she just looks a bit smaller," Lisa said.

"She's a happy baby. She's already naughty.

She's catching up really well and is developmentally fine."

Lisa is so grateful for the support she received and wants to pay it forward to other parents who find themselves in a similar - and sometimes worse - situation.

Lisa volunteers for Life's Little Treasures Foundation, a charity dedicated to supporting the families of babies born sick or prior to 37 weeks gestation.

The Hannas are taking part in Walk for Prems, an annual event where families walk in multiple locations to support the 48,000 premature or sick babies born in Australia every year.

Their team has already raised more than \$800 in the lead up to their 5km walk at Albert Park Lake on October 28.

To donate, visit walkforprems.org.au and search for Team Alexia H.



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Berwick girl Alexia Hanna, who turned 1 last week, was born premature after mum Lisa was taken to hospital 34 weeks into her pregnancy.

Picture: Stewart Chambers