



August 8 2004

Case study: Samantha Dalmas

Name: Samantha Dalmas

Age: 15 months old

Parents: Jodie Brownlee and Roy Dalmas

Sisters: Katie (8), Ashley (6), Gemma (2) and twin sister Cassandra.

- Fifteen-month-old Samantha Dalmas has been in and out of Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick (SCHR) and Campbelltown Hospital's Paediatric Unit over the past six months with a life-threatening gastric condition.
- Samantha suffers from severe gastro-oesophageal reflux that caused her to stop breathing and turn blue as she choked on stomach acid and regurgitated food in March.
- A series of tests and gastroendoscopy at Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick revealed she needed surgery called fundoplication to prevent acid leaking from the valve at the top of the stomach.
- Before surgery at Randwick, Samantha stayed at Campbelltown Hospital's Paediatric Unit where she was fed through a nasal gastric feed to prevent apnoea recurring.
- Samantha's mother Jodie Brownlee stayed with her every night during five consecutive months in hospital while raising a family of five girls under the age of nine with partner Roy.
- Jodie said the level of care and support the family received at both hospitals was brilliant but it was a relief to have excellent facilities so close to home at Campbelltown.
- "It was really stressful spending days and nights with Samantha while juggling the daily pressures of bringing up a family and being separated from the girls," said Jodie.
- "Being close to home really helped ease the logistics of travelling between home and hospital, taking the kids to school and arranging child care; while the fabulous support from hospital staff made a difficult situation much smoother."
- Samantha is making good progress and receives ongoing care from Campbelltown Hospital Paediatric Ambulatory Care Service (PACS) with a home visit from a speech pathologist each month and regular appointments with a dietician.
- "The creation of Sydney Children's Hospital Macarthur Unit is a positive step for the local community and families in south-western Sydney will appreciate that good specialist care for our children is just a short trip away," said Jodie.