

Life on the pediatric bone marrow transplant unit is like a long, scary roller coaster ride. During this ride, every child will see downhill and uphill days. Just like a roller coaster, downhill days may jump out of nowhere and be the start of a quick plunge downward. The uphill trip to recovery can be very slow and nerve racking. With each twist and turn everyone tries to remain optimistic and hopeful that his or her child, friend, or family member will have a favorable outcome.

We've had a front car seat on the PBMTU roller coaster. At first, Hunter smiled and played in the hallway. Suddenly, on day +6, Hunter was rushed to the ICU. Hunter remained sedated in the ICU for three excruciating weeks, where a new hill or curve delayed his ICU discharge. Our emotional state leapt down and curved along with Hunter's health. With the support of all the staff, family and friends (including friends here), we tried to be optimistic. Eventually, Hunter began his slow upward climb and was strong enough to return to the PBMTU.

Once out of the ICU, Hunter's upward climb gained steam. Initially, he was groggy and upset from three weeks of sedation. Then, he slowly began to sleep more and complain less. Around day 57, Hunter began to sit up and crawl. Despite the recent success, we know that the roller coaster will only continue. May optimism be everyone's "seatbelts" on the long roller coaster ride.

-- Lori, Duke PBMT Parent