

Declan O'Brien was still in the womb, just thirty-six weeks after conception, when his parents received some devastating news: he had a condition known as Vein of Galen, a rare vascular malformation that affects the blood vessels in the brain. With this condition, the connections in the back of the brain are missing capillaries, which causes high blood pressure. This can result in heart failure at birth or shortly thereafter.

This condition needs to be treated by an experienced neurosurgical team. If treated improperly, the consequences can be catastrophic, including possible death or permanent disability. Luckily for Declan, he was in the hands of one of the most gifted surgeons at Mount Sinai, and in the world.

The day Declan was born, weighing only 6.5 pounds, he was immediately taken into surgery for embolization, a procedure to close off the malformed

blood vessels. Surgeons used a technique developed at Mount Sinai to snake microcatheters through his umbilical artery and then into the brain, using medical glue to seal the blood vessels. This embolization procedure through the umbilical cord is unique to Mount Sinai and offers earlier and safer access to the patient's brain.

Declan has experienced a few developmental issues, and has to walk with braces; however, he is talking

and doing great. Considering the first day of his life was one of his hardest, every day thereafter has been a beautiful gift. **For you. For life.**

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