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Race to prolong baby's life as she fights rare condition

OUR BEAUTIFUL TINY MIRACLE

By PAMELA PATERSON

THE parents of a baby with a rare and deadly form of dwarfism hope doctors in the US can help extend her life.

Cassidy McCrone is one of only 55 children in the world who have the illness, which causes severe brain and breathing problems.

Now her desperate parents are trying to raise awareness of her plight in the hope of raising funds for vital medical trials.

Mum Natalie, 29, of East Kilbride, said: "They can't tell you what to expect – that's the worst part.

"Sixty per cent pass away in the first year and any child living to five is classed a long-term survivor.

"It can't be cured, I've resigned myself to that from the get-go. "She's a beautiful wee baby."

Love

Cassidy was born with the genetic condition Rhizomelic Chondrodysplasia Punctata Type 1.

Now nearly six months old, she can finally smile, but her parents know she will never talk or walk.

Mother-of-three Natalie added: "She's still fighting. We don't know how long she'll have. We're just enjoying each day as we get it."

A midwife noticed problems with Cassidy, whose twin died in the womb, on Natalie's 35-week scan.

Since her birth on March 25, she has faced numerous obstacles.

She wears hearing aids and has contact lenses after cataracts were removed from her eyes.

But Natalie said: "A drug company is trying to start this clinical trial in America to improve RCDP sufferers' lives. We'd love Cassidy to be part of it."

scottish-sun@the-sun.co.uk

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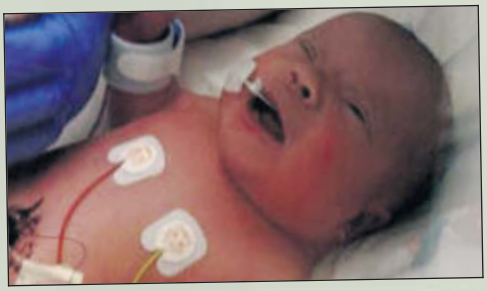

Ordeal . . . tot in hospital soon after birth

Devoted . . . Natalie hopes US trial can help Cassidy

WHAT IS RCDP?

VERY few kids with Rhizomelic Chondrodysplasia Punctata Type 1 survive into their teens.

It shortens the bones and results in severe physical and neurological problems.

The condition is hereditary and one of the world's rarest.

It is only passed on if both parents have the carrier gene.

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