

# HOW ZIMING JOINED OUR FAMILY



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ZiMing was almost ten months old and weighed less than nine pounds when he moved with his 28 China Care "brothers and sisters" into the new China Care Home in Beijing.

This seemingly frail little boy is awaiting heart and hernia surgery, the latest in a long line of medical treatments for an infant born with serious birth defects. His caregivers believe that when ZiMing receives those surgeries he will finally be on his way to better health: "He is the cutest and strongest baby!" boasts one of his doting nannies: "He never stops fighting even after all he has been through." But his path has not been an easy one.

ZiMing arrived in this world when Beijing was in a frenzy preparing to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. He was born prematurely in Shanxi province, far to the southwest of all the commotion, with anal atresia, a condition in which the opening of the anus is absent or obstructed. This is a dangerous condition, but one that can be corrected quite easily with surgery if it is treated right away. Unfortunately, ZiMing did not arrive at the local orphanage until eight days after his birth. By then his belly had become extremely swollen and his breathing, a symptom of his heart condition, too fast.



The local hospital gave ZiMing a colostomy to temporarily deal with his condition, but the surgery was not successful. China Care took ZiMing in when he weighed less than 4 ½ pounds, and transferred him to Beijing to receive care from the most experienced doctors. In Beijing, ZiMing's health began to deteriorate quickly. He had breathing problems and a fever related to his failed colostomy surgery. ZiMing had to be hospitalized several times before he was well enough to undergo surgery again.



Finally, in early 2009, ZiMing was strong enough for surgery to correct anal atresia. He remained in the intensive care unit for an entire week.

Not long after he was discharged from the hospital, ZiMing was hospitalized again for pneumonia. While being treated for pneumonia, his doctors rechecked his heart and discovered that he still had a small opening between his aorta and his pulmonary artery, which is the cause of his rapid breathing. They determined that ZiMing needs more surgery to close that opening to prevent further inflammation, which can lead to serious illnesses. And this tough guy also needs an operation to cure a hernia, which developed while he was struggling with his many other disorders.

Though he has already in his short life endured more medical treatment than most people do in a lifetime, ZiMing's caregivers believe that his intense will to live will see him through his next round of medical treatment. They are especially heartened by his curiosity and his ability to communicate with them with his clear, bright eyes and his many facial expressions--even when he is struggling physically. And on the days when ZiMing is feeling better, his caregivers know it right away, because he breaks into a smile, a smile that provides a hint of the happy child he can be once his medical struggles are finally behind him.

