



## Will you be a beacon of hope to people living with epilepsy this Christmas?



Abigail's and her family's story is one of bravery. One that brings hope for many families like her across Queensland, and I wanted to share it with you.

Abigail was diagnosed with multi-focal epilepsy at just 20 months of age. Her parents Danica and Jason told us her first noticeable seizure was at three days old and they knew then it would be a long journey.

In Ingham they don't have the equipment or the expertise to diagnose epilepsy, so there wasn't many options except to refer to a Brisbane based Paediatric Neurologist over 1,500 Kilometres away.

Danica said "the day she was diagnosed was a mixture of relief, guilt and heartbreak. I was glad to have a name for what was happening but at the same time questioning whether we did something wrong to cause this and wondering how her future would look. We mourned the loss of a normal childhood for her. Our family needed support, so I phoned the Epilepsy Queensland Helpline".

**Will you donate today to help ensure newly diagnosed children and adults have access to the Epilepsy Queensland Helpline?**

People who call the Epilepsy Queensland Helpline will be looked after by our caring and knowledgeable team members who are specifically trained in epilepsy management and are there to provide understanding, information and support when it is needed most.

*"Having someone to talk to who has had firsthand experience and deals with epilepsy all the time has been amazing and so beneficial to our family", says Danica.*

Through her epilepsy journey, Abigail and her family have tried many medications, unfortunately none of which have reduced the severity or length of her seizures.

Danica shares: "It was really difficult as a parent to watch your child's personality change so severely. I don't think we have such a thing as a normal day! Our days are so medicalised it's crazy. Before gaining a degree of seizure control though, our days would consist of six or more seizures and at least an overnight stay in hospital each week."

**Increasing the awareness and understanding of epilepsy in the wider community is a priority for Epilepsy Queensland. We know that everyone is impacted differently by epilepsy but some myths and misconceptions remain constant. Danica and Jason experienced firsthand the stigma associated with epilepsy.**



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*"We get a lot of judgment and opinions which is hard for both Abigail and the family as a unit. Having spent so much time in hospital, Abigail has a limited friendship circle. We try to surround ourselves with people who understand our circumstances and are accepting of Abigail and her lifestyle", says Danica.*

Danica recalls another especially tough time: "We had a two week period last November where Abigail experienced over 120 clinical seizures. I honestly thought at times during those two weeks we wouldn't be going home and that was by far the toughest time in this journey."

*"Epilepsy Queensland helps so many families to cope with a sometimes devastating diagnosis. They assist families to gain knowledge and help and can connect individuals and families with much needed resources. As a family who has medical bills like you wouldn't believe, it takes the pressure off us knowing that thanks to generous supporters of Epilepsy Queensland, help is a phone call or email away", says Danica.*

Abigail, now three years old, is doing much better. This is due in part to a new diet and a combination of more effective medications. Her progress is also a testament to the unwavering love and care of her amazing parents, Danica and Jason.

Danica says "We have been super lucky that Abigail's childcare centre was able to apply for an aide for her to keep close watch and ensured all the employees completed Epilepsy Queensland's training in Understanding epilepsy and the administration of Midazolam. They also have completed theoretical and practical training on her keto diet and tube feeding. My hope for Abigail is that she can live her best life and enjoy the small victories!"

**Because of the support from people like you we could be there for Danica and Jason's family when they needed it the most. Please donate today to help families and individuals just like Danica and Jason to receive the information and support they need, as they continue along their epilepsy journey.**

Thank you in advance for your continued support and generosity.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Dougherty  
Chief Executive



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- 3 Or complete and return the enclosed coupon in the reply paid envelope
- 4 Consider a lasting gift through regular giving or getting your workplace involved

**P.S.**

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