

GH What's Ahead For Carly & Sonny?

Caring for a newborn isn't easy. Caring for a newborn with a serious medical condition like spina bifida will be exponentially more complicated for GENERAL HOSPITAL's Carly and Sonny. What kind of challenges will the Corinthoses be facing in just a few short months when their newest addition arrives? *Soaps In Depth* turned to an expert in the field to find out!

The In Depth Story: As Dr. Brad Dicianno — Associate Medical Director and Chair, Professional Advisory Council of the Spina Bifida Association — explains it, “Spina bifida literally means split spine. If the spinal cord doesn't fully form a tube when the embryo is developing, the spine will not be completely closed. Where that defect is determines what impairments the baby might have.”

Of the three subtypes of spina bifida, Baby Corinthos was diagnosed with the middle level, meningocele. In these patients, while protective membranes will

push through an opening in the vertebrae, the spinal cord itself is not included so nerve damage is less likely. “Meningocele is less severe than the most common type,” notes Dicianno. “There would be less potential for weakness in the legs, which could affect the baby's development and ability to walk. Most of these children will ultimately walk later. There is also less chance for loss of sensation to the skin or problems with bladder and bowel function. The lesion's location can af-

fect how extensive the problems would be.”

While meningocele means that Carly is not a candidate for in-utero surgery, having the operation performed within the first few hours after the baby's birth is crucial. “There are some babies literally born with a



Caring for a child who has special needs will be a daily struggle for Sonny and Carly.

“Even if a child has difficulty walking, it doesn't mean they can't be independent,” he shares. “We can use braces or assistive devices. They learn to manage their bowels and bladder. With the right care, patients can do quite well.”

Coming from a family of means will certainly work in Baby Corinthos' favor. “The medical care is extremely expensive, and even the best insurance doesn't cover everything,” admits the doctor. “The amount of home-care services or therapy you receive might be

hole in their back,” explains Dicianno. “Some of their nervous system will be herniated out through that hole. It's really important that this lesion be closed.”

Dicianno says that one of the first questions asked by parents like Carly and Sonny is, will their child walk?

capped. Having a lot of financial resources means that you would potentially be able to provide those services” on one's own.

There's no doubt that Carly and Sonny have challenges ahead like they've never faced before. And the mom-to-be's portrayer, Laura Wright, is up for it. “I like to tell any kind of storyline that goes there in a real way or causes drama,” she says. “If there's struggle and it shines light on something at the same time, that's even better!”

Dicianno, too, is grateful that the soap is drawing attention to this disabling birth defect with this storyline. “Thank you,” he concludes. “It's a condition that is not well-understood by people in general and by the medical community. Highlighting the condition itself and the issues that the baby and the family will face will be interesting and is really something that people can benefit from learning about.”

For additional info, please visit
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