

German baby survives record-equalling premature birth

23 April 2011

A German baby born after only 21 weeks and five days in the womb has equalled a world record for surviving premature infants, the hospital said Saturday.

When Frieda was born on November 7 she measured 11 inches (28 centimetres) and weighed only one pound (460 grammes).

"In the specialist literature, other premature babies have been lighter than her at birth, some even less than 300 grammes, but there is no mention of a premature baby even younger than Frieda," the clinic in western Fulda said in a communique.

A baby was born in Ottawa in 1987 at exactly the same stage of its mother's pregnancy, the statement said.

Frieda was discharged on Wednesday weighing 7.7 pounds (3.5 kilos) and measuring 50 centimetres (nearly 20 inches), the clinic said.

Her twin brother Kilian died a few days after being born.

Professor Reinald Repp, director of the paediatric clinic, could not be reached on Saturday, but a doctor on duty told AFP that "there is no foreseeable risk of after-effects for the moment" and that the little girl "should develop normally like any other child."

Generally babies born before 22 weeks have no chance of surviving because their lungs, heart and brain are not sufficiently developed.

"Frieda was kept in a completely sterile environment, with her breathing assisted and fed through her navel," Repp told the mass circulation Bild newspaper.

Any baby born before eight months of pregnancy is considered premature.

Very premature babies (less than 32 weeks) are considered at high risk of suffering developmental problems.

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