

From tumor to toddler: A Montana man's path to fatherhood

VIDEO	AUDIO
	---nats up---
Jason	Nestled among the rolling hills of central Montana is Roundup.
Derin	"It got its name from literally rounding up cattle here because of the river and the landscape."
Jason	A small town ...
Derin	"Eleven-hundred people in the city"
Jason	... where there are no strangers.
Derin	"Everybody knows everybody."
	---nats up---
Jason	A lifelong resident, Derin Gebhardt takes great pride serving as a volunteer firefighter.
Derin	"I want to help people. I want to follow my dad's footsteps. I want to make a difference in my community."
Jason	And like most in this tiny town, family matters.
Derin Gebhardt Patient	"It's important to take care of those around you because one day they may need to take care of you."
Jason	A newlywed in 2016...
Sandra Gebhardt Derin's Wife	"We dated for eight months and then married after that, and here we are."
Jason	... Derin was in his 30s, but his health was a concern.
Derin	"I was not sleeping well. I had terribly high blood pressure. I was 465 pounds."

Jason	He was eating healthy and exercising, but couldn't lose weight.
Sandra	"I remember talking to my mom and I was like, 'There's something wrong, but we can't find it. I just was scared to death that he was going to die.'"
Jason	And they were trying, to no avail, to have a baby. Derin's wife, Sandra, suggested that the problem might be hormones.
Derin	"She comes home and she says, 'I've got a feeling that maybe you have low testosterone.'"
Jason	Sandra's suspicions were right. And a local doctor confirmed the hormone imbalance was caused by a benign tumor on his pituitary gland near the brain.
Derin	"I kind of had a sense of opening a new door and not knowing where that's going to lead you, but also a little bit of relief, like, to say that, 'OK, it's not my fault.'"
Jason	Medication to reduce the size of the tumor was first, followed by surgery to remove it at Mayo Clinic in Phoenix, Arizona.
Bernard Bendok, M.D. Neurosurgery Mayo Clinic	"His hormones were out of whack because of this tumor pushing on the pituitary gland."
Devyani Lal, M.D. Otorhinolaryngology Mayo Clinic	"This particular tumor called a prolactinoma produces a hormone called prolactin. The function of prolactin is to inhibit fertility."
Jason	The minimally invasive surgery took a team of Mayo experts in neurosurgery and otorhinolaryngology to remove.
Dr. Lal	"We actually go through two nostrils and we work as two surgeons with four hands. We actually use very small microscopic instruments with great precision in what we remove."
Jason	Surgeons successfully removed the tumor.
Dr. Bendok	"His testosterone normalized. His prolactin level went to normal. His MRI after surgery showed complete tumor resection."

	And less than nine months later...
Derin	"When she told me she was pregnant, it was an answered prayer."
Jason	Little Gage arrived six weeks early.
Derin	"It was wonderful when he was born and he was healthy. And I changed his first diaper and held him in the NICU – an overwhelming joy and also a feeling of someone else is depending on you now."
Dr. Bendok	"We often think of endpoints in terms of just the patient's health. But when you also allow a family to create life together, that is just a very meaningful thing."
Sandra	"It definitely shouldn't have happened from a scientific standpoint, but it did. And we were very, very excited."
Jason	Derin is a doting dad.
Derin	"You just say, 'Wow, you know, what a blessing.'"
Jason	He's lost a significant amount of weight. His blood pressure is normal. He's sleeping well and full of energy, just like his son.
Sandra	"He really keeps us on our toes."
Derin	"He's definitely one to explore. He likes to do his perimeter sweeps around the room and around the house."
Derin	"I'd love for Gage to grow up and have a happy childhood."
Derin	"The future's bright."
Jason	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.