

## Emily Jerry

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As told by Emily's father, Christopher S. Jerry



Emily Jerry was diagnosed with a yolk sac tumor about the size of a grapefruit when she was about 18 months old. Her doctors and nurses assured me that Emily's cancer was not only treatable, but curable.

Emily endured months of surgeries, grueling testing, and rigorous chemotherapy sessions. Emily's treatment had been so successful that her last MRI showed there wasn't even any residual scar tissue. Emily's doctors said it was as if she never had cancer.

Regardless, she was scheduled to begin her last chemotherapy session on her second birthday, Feb. 24, 2006. This was just to be sure that there were no traces of cancer left.

Sunday, Feb. 26, after the third day of her last chemotherapy treatment, Emily awoke from her nap groggy. She kept trying to sit up and asked her mom to hold her in her lap. She kept grabbing her head and moaning that it hurt. Emily spotted her mother's can of Coke that she had on the tray and begged to have a sip. She sipped the rest of the can through the straw in a matter of seconds. She cried some more before she started screaming, "Mommy, my head, my head hurts! MY HEAD HURTS!"

I was just walking in as nurses were grabbing her from her mom's arms. Emily went completely limp and the nurses began to resuscitate her. Within the hour, my precious daughter was on life support.

Emily wound up brain dead and on life support – essentially dead due to the massive brain damage she had incurred. Our Emily was killed by an overdose of sodium chloride in her chemotherapy IV bag.

We had planned a belated birthday and a cancer-free party for her. Instead, Emily was delivered to the Cuyahoga County Morgue.

My family has been completely destroyed by the preventable and tragic death.

A pharmacy technician who had been working for the hospital for a number of years decided not to use a standard prepared bag of sodium chloride solution (with less than 1% of sodium chloride solution).

Instead, the pharmacy technician filled a plastic bag with a concentrated sodium chloride solution of 23.4%, which she had compounded herself.



When the pharmacy board investigators and others investigating Emily's death asked the technician why she had made this outrageous error, she replied that she did not know. The pharmacy technician was asked if she knew that an overdose of sodium chloride could result in death. She claimed that she was not aware of that fact. How can a person who works in a pharmacy and compounds medications daily not know that?

At the time of Emily's death, Ohio didn't even register pharmacy technicians. In fact, there weren't even any training or licensing requirements.