

THIS is the little boy who survived a stroke when he was just EIGHT HOURS old. Tiny Frankie Gill sustained brain damage to the left side of his brain as a result of the stroke - but now amazingly his brain has repaired itself because of how young he was. He has suffered no side effects of the stroke - and manages to live a normal life. His mother Hannah, 25, said: 'We didn't know what the future would hold for Frankie after doctors discovered he'd had a stroke at just a few hours old. 'We were told that he had suffered damage to the left parts of the brain but we had to wait and see what that damage would mean for him. 'Amazingly he has done really well and doesn't seem to have suffered any side effects. The doctors have said it was because he was so young, his brain has been able to repair itself as he has developed. 'He has been incredibly lucky - he has reached every milestone that he should have done.' Miss Gill, who lives in Co Durham, with partner Michael Donkin, 26, who is in the army, had enjoyed a smooth pregnancy and she went into labour in April 2017 at Sunderland Royal Infirmary. But there were complications when the baby's heart rate started dropping during the birth. Miss Gill said: 'After a few hours in labour I was given an epidural and suddenly a strange feeling came over me and the machine measuring my heart beat started to beep. 'I was hot and sweaty and could feel my heart thumping in my chest. Minutes later another machine began to beep, showing that my baby's heart rate was dropping. 'The doctors just kept saying they needed to get the baby out now.' Minutes later Frankie was delivered using forceps, weighing 8lb4. Miss Gill said: 'It was such a relief to see him there, after the panic, and he looked healthy so at that point I was just relieved.' But then doctors noticed that part of his umbilical cord had turned black and they worried it was a sign of infection. Tests showed that both mother and baby had contracted sepsis during the labour and they were pumped full of antibiotics. A few hours later the couple, who also have a daughter Isla, three, were with Frankie when they noticed his left arm and leg began to twitch. She said: 'We didn't know what it was. Moments later it happened again and the nurse noticed it too. 'They told us he was having a seizure and he was moved to the neonatal ward, where he then had another fit straight away. 'This time it lasted longer and he screamed and thrashed and I thought it would never end. I just begged the doctors to save him. I felt so helpless.' Frankie was taken for an MRI scan and the couple were told that a blood clot had passed through the umbilical cord to his brain and caused Frankie to have a stroke. Miss Gill said: 'I couldn't believe what I was hearing. How could a newborn baby have a stroke at just eight hours old. We had no idea that such a young baby could ever have such a thing.' The scans had shown that Frankie had suffered damage to the left side of his brain, but doctors couldn't tell the devastated couple how severely he had been affected. Miss Gill said: 'Because he was so young, they hoped his brain would repair itself as it developed. 'We were worried about it, but they discharged us from the hospital and luckily he had no more seizures.' Frankie is now 17 months old and has so far hit all his milestones. He managed to take his first steps just before his first birthday in April this year. Miss Gill added: 'After everything that has happened it has been wonderful to see him smiling, giggling and reaching all his milestones. 'He even managed to take his first steps when he was just 11 months old, so he definitely hasn't let it hold him back. 'He's such a determined little boy and after such a tough start, it's wonderful to see him making so much progress. He doesn't let anything hold him back.' A spokesman for the Stroke Association said: 'It is extremely rare for a baby to have a stroke during or just after birth.'