

TINIEST BABY IS THRIVING & AMAZING DOCS

AT JUST 9 ounces, baby Jada Wilson was so tiny she could fit in a coffee mug — but the precious preemie's miraculous birth is BIG news in the world of medicine.

She set the world record for the smallest surviving baby ever born!

Jada was one of a set of twins, who came into the world on Nov. 17, 2003. Her sister Jasmine — weighing only 1 pound at birth — died tragically two weeks later, but remarkable Jada, nearly 4 months old, keeps on thriving and continues to amaze medical experts.

It has been a roller-coaster ride of joy and sorrow for the twins' mom Ayanna Wilson.

"This whole thing has been such a painful experience," Ayanna told *The ENQUIRER*. "I pray for Jada every night before I go to sleep.

"I already lost one baby, my precious little Jasmine, and I keep her picture by my bed. I also sleep with their wristbands under my pillow. I think about them every minute of the day, and sometimes I just can't help bursting into tears.

"It takes all my strength to remain strong — but I have to, for Jada's sake."

Ayanna was a 22-year-old college student studying business administration in Fayetteville, N.C., when she and her student boyfriend, Cory Hickman, 19, learned that she was pregnant.

Ayanna's mother, Jewel Wilson, who lives in Las Vegas, told *The ENQUIRER* that for the first five months, Ayanna's pregnancy seemed to be developing normally.

"Ayanna was just starting to have a belly, and in pictures from the sonogram, you could see the twins were



GROWING STRONG: Little Jada in her father's arms as a newborn, and today with her loving mom.

coming along nicely," Jewel said. "But a few days after I got home from visiting her, Ayanna started to swell up."

Ayanna left school and went home to her father in Charlotte. When the swelling continued, her father and brothers called 911. She was rushed to the hospital where doctors discovered her blood pressure was sky high and she had blood poisoning, also known as toxemia.

"To save her life, and the babies' lives, the doctors did an emergency C-section," said Jewel.

Ayanna was crushed a short time later when she saw her helpless little girls struggling for life in the hospital's neonatal department.

"They didn't look like

JUST 9 OUNCES AT BIRTH

NOW — ALMOST 3 POUNDS



regular infants," she said. "Their skin was thin and tender, and there was no fat at all on their bodies. You could even see their blood vessels showing through their skin.

"Their heads were so big compared to their bodies.

"Jasmine was actually the stronger of the two, really feisty and moving around a lot. Everyone thought she'd make it for sure.

"But then, suddenly, she

wouldn't take any nutrients. Her vital signs stopped and everything shut down, and she had to go on life support.

"The machines were all that were keeping her alive, so the doctors pulled the plug."

Jada now weighs only 2 pounds, 15 ounces. She is still in the ICU and on feeding tubes that give her baby formula intravenously, but she no longer needs to be in an incubator and she's breathing on her own.

Doctors are hopeful, but say it's too early to predict whether she'll have any lingering health problems.

"There's no way I can even make a projection on

the baby's future, because there are no statistics on a 9-ounce baby who survived," Dr. William Kanto of the Medical College of Georgia, Children's Medical Center, told *The ENQUIRER*.

According to Ronald McDonald Children's Hospital at Loyola University Medical Center in Illinois, the old record was held by a 9.9-ounce girl born in that hospital in 1989. Jada beat that record by $\frac{1}{10}$ of an ounce!

But even though Jada is improving daily, a date has yet to be set for her to leave the hospital.

"Three months after Jada was born, I was finally able to hold her for the first time," said Ayanna. "Now, I live for the day when she'll be able to come home."

— ROBIN MIZRAH

