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## Palm-sized baby, 2nd smallest in US, is growing



courtesy Haydee Ibarra via AP

This undated photo provided by Melinda Guido's family shows Melinda, with her mother's fingers in the scene, in the neonatal intensive care unit at the Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. Melinda was born premature at 24 weeks weighing 9.5 ounces. She's believed to be the second smallest surviving baby in the United States and third smallest in the world.

The Associated Press reports from [LOS ANGELES](#):

At birth, Melinda Star Guido was so tiny she could fit into the palm of her doctor's hand. Weighing just 9 1/2 ounces, she is

among the smallest babies ever born in the world. Most infants her size don't survive, but doctors are preparing to send her home by New Year's.



Jae C. Hong / AP

Now 14 weeks old, Melinda Star Guido holds her mother's little finger while lying in an incubator at the same hospital on Dec. 14, 2011.



Jae C. Hong / AP

Haydee Ibarra, right, watches as her daughter gets her eyes examined by ophthalmologist John Hwang on Dec. 14, 2011.

Melinda was born premature at 24 weeks over the summer and spent the early months cocooned in an incubator in the neonatal intensive care unit in Southern California. Almost every day, her 22-year-old mother sits at her bedside and stays overnight whenever she can.

The day before her Thursday due date, Haydee Ibarra visited Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center where her daughter has been since her birth in late August. Melinda is believed to be the second smallest baby to survive in the U.S. and third in the world.



Haydee Ibarra holds Melinda on Dec. 14, 2011.

Jae C. Hong / AP



Jae C. Hong / AP

Melinda holds her mother's little finger on Dec. 14.

Ibarra caressed Melinda through the portholes of the incubator where nurses pinned up a homemade sign bearing her name. Now weighing four pounds, Melinda gripped Ibarra's pinky finger and yawned.

"Melinda, Melinda," she cooed at her daughter dressed in a polka dot onesie. "You're awake today." [Read the full story.](#)