

They Saved A Baby's Life—Here's How You Could, Too

(NAPS)—If your family is like most, you've spent months preparing for the joys and challenges that arise with the arrival of a new baby—and if your family is like many, you've discovered not everything can be planned.

One Family's Story

Consider the case of the McKenas: In July 2020, at six months pregnant with her second child, Erica McKenna and her husband Dan, received devastating news about their unborn



daughter. Their baby was experiencing a condition called maternal alloimmunization. This condition can occur when a pregnant woman's blood contains certain antibodies that attack the red blood cells of the fetus. This can cause the baby to become dangerously anemic.

Doctors told Erica if this condition was not treated, her baby would die. To stabilize and save her child's life, Erica's baby received five blood transfusions in utero starting at 24 weeks.

Just two months later, at eight months pregnant, Erica experienced worrying symptoms requiring immediate action. Within hours, she was in the hospital where she underwent an emergency C-section. Following delivery, her infant daughter was rushed to the NICU where another three blood transfusions were needed.

Nearly a year later, Erica and Dan's daughter, Annie, is a thriving baby with a smile for everyone.

"You would never know she went through all of that," said Erica. "We're extremely lucky. We're grateful for the people who donate blood and the amazing doctors who took care of us both."

Arms Out For Annie

To give back, Erica and her family started Arms Out for Annie, a special blood donation campaign with a goal to recruit 100 donors to give blood in



Blood donors saved a baby's life eight times before her first birthday. Now, her family is asking more people to give.

Annie's name before her first birthday on September 26.

"Annie's life was saved eight times," said Erica, referring to the eight transfusions her daughter received before and after birth. "She wouldn't be here without them. And I can't imagine our lives without her."

What You Can Do

Currently, there is an emergency need for lifesaving blood donations. As the nation confronts a severe blood shortage, due to a rise in hospital demand for blood, the American Red Cross urges those who are healthy and able to donate now.

The Red Cross is distributing more blood products to hospitals across the country compared to the same time last year. Over the past three months, the Red Cross sent 12% more blood products to hospitals each day for patients. Hospitals are responding to a higher number of traumas and emergency room visits and seeing patients who postponed medical care earlier in the COVID-19 pandemic.

All blood types are needed, particularly type O. With only about a day's supply of type O blood, there is an emergency need for type O donors. Type O is the most needed blood group by hospitals. In most cases, those who have received a COVID-19 vaccine can donate.

How To Help

Healthy individuals are urged to schedule an appointment to give blood or platelets by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED-CROSS.