

'RCH saved my life'

Amie MacNeil pulled through, thanks to the expertise and cutting-edge technology at Royal Columbian

Amie MacNeil was a healthy 27-year-old when she became pregnant with her first child. But because she had suffered hydrocephalus (swelling on the brain) during her infancy, she was advised by her physician to have her baby at Royal Columbian Hospital (RCH) because hers was considered a high-risk pregnancy.

This cautionary advice saved her life.

After a perfectly healthy pregnancy and the birth of a gorgeous little boy named Jacob, Amie experienced a postpartum hemorrhage (her uterus would not contract).

This led to a cascade of interventions from drugs to surgery to help contract the uterus.

As her gynecologist Dr. Peter Beresford and his team worked to stem the hemorrhage, Amie went into cardiac arrest.

One of the attending anesthetists, Dr. Robert Sharpe, is also a cardiac surgeon and together with Beresford, they worked to save Amie's life.

She was put on ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation – a machine that allows for the recovery of the lungs and heart) and was placed in an induced coma for 12 days.

It took two days for her to be slowly weaned off the ECMO machine.

During this time, Amie's husband Todd knew he was in danger of losing the love of his life.

Emotionally conflicted, his attention was split between the joy of his first-born son and the devastation of possibly losing Amie.

After almost a month in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and High Acuity Unit, Amie went home, fully recovered.

Recently Amie and Todd have adopted Nolan, who is now 11 months old.

This completes their happy family of four. "If I did not have our baby at RCH I probably would not have survived," Amie says.

"I was in the right place at the right time and had some of the best physicians I could have asked for at my bedside, making

decisions that saved my life. I was also fortunate that RCH had the right equipment and technology available to allow for my heart and lungs to recover during those initial days when my condition was so critical."

Her husband Todd agrees. "There really are no words to describe how terrifying that situation was," he says.

"At a time when I was meant to be celebrating the birth of my son, I was in absolute shock over the possibility of losing my wife."

"The maternity nurses at RCH were incredibly supportive, training me in all the practicalities of being a dad. The nurses in ICU went the extra mile to give me time to be with my wife Amie."

"If ever there was a reason to give, I have them by the handful!"



Above: Amie MacNeil with her newly adopted son Nolan. In the background is her husband Todd and son Jacob.

Left: Amie shortly after giving birth to Jacob. "If I did not have our baby at RCH I probably would not have survived," she says.

Did you know?

- RCH's Cardiac Centre is among the best in Canada. Show them your support by purchasing a heart tile for the Cardiac Wall of Gratitude. Visit rchcares.com for more information.



A reason to hope.
A reason to give.