

## TESTIMONIAL

# Saved by plasma donors

Almost two years ago, Émilie Morneau-Guérin experienced the joy of becoming a mother, and the anguish of finding out that her son Éli, then three-months old, had Kawasaki syndrome, a serious heart disease.

**“It was a true race against time to prevent an aneurism rupture. Luckily, the necessary product was available.”**

– Émilie Morneau-Guérin

Louis

Éli with  
his mother,  
Émilie



For information on plasma donation:  
[www.hema-quebec.qc.ca](http://www.hema-quebec.qc.ca), Blood > Blood  
Donors > Donation Types section

This childhood disease generally appears before the age of 5 and affects the heart and coronary arteries. Most often, this syndrome weakens certain parts of the walls of the coronary arteries, leading to the development of a pocket on the inside of an artery called an aneurism. Blood clots can develop in the weakened areas, which could obstruct the coronary artery and even cause a heart attack. In Éli's case, it was inflammation of the membrane surrounding the heart that led to the diagnosis. “It was a true race against time to prevent an aneurism rupture,” explains his mother, Émilie. “Luckily, the necessary product was available.”

Immunoglobulin preparations were the product in question. Immunoglobulins are proteins found in plasma. They are mainly used in the treatment of certain blood cancers or diseases affecting the immune system. They were administered to Éli intravenously.

Plasma is the liquid component of blood that contains red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. It makes up 55% of blood volume in humans. Fractionating plasma makes it possible to isolate and purify certain proteins, such as immunoglobulins, which are then used to make medications.

“It's thanks to plasma donations that Éli is healthy today. He will have to be followed for the rest of his life and avoid certain activities, but that's nothing compared to the complications that could have arisen had he not been treated,” Émilie adds.

## A challenge for Québec

To make medications such as the one given to Éli, you need plasma, and lots of it. While Québec fully meets its needs for fresh plasma transfused to patients, such is not the case for the plasma needed to make medications such as immunoglobulin solutions. Last year, 55,000 litres of plasma from Québec blood donations was used to make medications. Québec wants to collect 200,000 litres by 2020. Héma-Québec plans on achieving this primarily through a network of collection centres: the PLASMAVIE Plasma Donor Lounges (see pages 6 to 9).

Éli's mother also intends to help meet this challenge by raising awareness about plasma donation among as many people as possible. “I have been giving blood for a long time, but since my son Eli received immunoglobulin treatments, I have a better understanding of the importance of this gesture,” she says. “I can now put a face to the lives saved thanks to these donations, and this is what compelled me to raise awareness about the cause among my friends and family.” •