

By ROBERT PIERCE • Leader & Times In 2011, after repeated stops of his heartbeat, Elias Volden came into the world via a C section of his mother, Krista.

Those stoppages included the infant losing 75 percent of his blood in his mother's system through a fetomaternal hemorrhage, something doctors did not discover until it was revealed through a test of both Elias' and Krista's blood following the delivery.

Fetomaternal hemorrhage is a rare condition which only occurs in .3 percent of people, and according to doctors, babies rarely survive the condition. "Most are stillborn and then there's nothing they can do," Krista said in a 2011 interview with the Leader & Times. "We're really fortunate." Shortly after his birth, Elias' condition would continue, but thanks to two blood transfusions, the youngster is one of the rare cases of survival from fetomaternal hemorrhage.

In an interview Friday, Krista said even after the transfusions, doctors said the odds were high that her son would never be able to talk and walk, but she said Elias is now doing that and more.

"He runs everywhere and talks non-stop," she said.

Krista said Elias had even had therapy for his condition, a place medical officials likewise said the child would probably have to be his whole life. He has also beaten those odds.

"He's been dismissed from that," Krista said. "When they dismissed him, they said he's actually doing things that 2- and 3-year-olds are supposed to be doing, and that was when he had just turned 1. He's 19 months now."

Krista said without the two blood transfusions Elias had received, he likely would not be alive today, and she is now encouraging everyone to donate blood, noting nurses in the Denver hospital where she was treated during her pregnancy had said the second transfusion her son received "took him from maybe not making it through the day to being a healthy little boy."

Krista said her fiance, Bill Holcomb, like the rest of his family, had always given blood. The Liberal mother said she had not done so, but what has happened with her son has changed her mind.

“After everything with him, it made me want to be able to give,” she said.

It has been 19 months since Elias was born, and up until recently, however, Krista could not give blood.

“I couldn’t for a while because his blood had went into my system, and they wanted me to wait a while before I could donate,” she said.

A few weeks ago, for the first time since her son’s birth, Krista was able to donate blood, something she said she and Bill did together. Krista said because of what she had gone through with Elias, giving blood made her thankful for those who helped her son survive to this point.

“One or two people did that same thing, and that’s why we have Elias today,” she said. “It made me think kind of an overwhelming feeling. It made me think I could be laying there saving someone else’s baby or loved one. It just kind of gave me the chills to even think about.”

Krista said she had tried to give when she was in high school, but an incident there got her off donations for a while.

“I started to feel light headed, and when they went to lay me down, the needle actually ripped out of my arm,” she said.

Krista said this time around, blood drive workers were a little more cautious.

“They asked if I had given, and I kind of told them about what had happened,” she said.

The high school incident had happened about five or six years before her recent donation, and Krista described how blood drive workers helped her through the process of her recent donation.

“If you want, we can start you laying down,” she said of what she had been told as she started to give blood. “They had me lay down. I think they were extra cautious just because they knew I was nervous from what happened previously. It went really well. I didn’t get dizzy. I wasn’t nervous at all.”

As for her son, Krista said he is now a perfectly normal child.

“He’s onery,” she said. “He walks, and he talks and gets into everything.”

Elias still has regular check ups with Dr. Mariana Lucero of Liberal, but Krista said everything now looks good.

“She has us do blood work every once in a while just to make sure everything’s OK,” she said. “She does want us to contact Crossroads and do a little bit of horse therapy just because of the lack of oxygen in the beginning. She said it’s just something that’ll be good for him and is not a necessity.”

Krista said giving blood can do the same thing for other people that it did for her son – save lives.

“It can really make the difference between having somebody and not having them,” she said.