

# 'Power of positive': Michigan conjoined twins separated

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Alyson and Phil Irwin the parents of 1-year-old conjoined twins Sarabeth and Amelia Irwin visit at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Aug. 26, 2020, after more than two dozen doctors, nurses and specialist separated them. The nearly 11-hour surgery was performed in August at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital about 14 months after their birth. They're now at home. (Photo by Joe Hallisy/Michigan Medicine via AP)

Doctors at the University of Michigan have separated 1-year-old conjoined twin sisters.

Sarabeth and Amelia Irwin of Petersburg, Michigan, each had their own

arms and legs and heart, but their livers were connected, C.S. Mott Children's Hospital said Friday.

The nearly 11-hour surgery to separate them was performed in August, about 14 months after their birth. They're now at home.

"For everyone in the room, it was a very emotional and extraordinary moment when the last incision was made to separate these girls from one to two," said Dr. George Mychaliska, who led the [surgical team](#) at Mott.

"I'm a father of twins and know twins are very close," Mychaliska said. "Sarabeth and Amelia will always share a really unique bond, and I think the future is bright for both of them."

The parents, Alyson and Phil Irwin, learned about the [conjoined twins](#) during a pregnancy ultrasound in 2019, four months before the birth by cesarean section. The Irwins knew the girls might not survive long enough for surgery, but they did.

"I remember them briefly putting the girls on my chest. It was very sweet and special being able to hold them and see them for the first time," Alyson [told](#) the Detroit Free Press.

One year-old conjoined twins Sarabeth and Amelia Irwin are checked in at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Aug 5, 2020, before more than two dozen doctors, nurses and specialist separated them. The nearly 11-hour surgery was performed about 14 months after their birth. They're now at home. (Photo by Joe Hallisy/Michigan Medicine via AP)

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Pediatric heart surgeon Dr. Richard Ohye speaks with Alyson and Phil Irwin the parents of 1-year-old conjoined twins Sarabeth and Amelia Irwin at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Aug 5, 2020, before more than two dozen doctors, nurses and specialist separated them. The nearly 11-hour surgery was performed in August at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital about 14 months after their birth. They're now at home. (Joe Hallisy/Michigan Medicine via AP)

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The surgery had been planned for February, but the [girls](#) developed pneumonia and then the coronavirus pandemic followed.

The parents had to stay outside the hospital in their car during the [surgery](#). Sarabeth came home in late August, followed by Amelia on Sept. 5. They have an older sister, Kennedy.

"This has been a giant experiment in the power of positive and the power of prayer," Phil said. "You know, so positive news, people need that. People live on that."

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