

# Find the hero in you.

## Meet Joe...

Most people don't expect a life-altering experience to happen on vacation, but it did for Joe. He was celebrating the New Year in Southern California with his wife, Teresa, and son, Blake. Joe began to experience flu-like symptoms. During the evening, he reached for something and hit his right elbow very hard on the corner of an end table.

The next morning, Joe's elbow was bruised, but nothing unusual. He still felt as though he was coming down with the flu. By the fourth day, he developed a high fever and his arm was getting more painful. By 4:30 a.m., his elbow was throbbing and twice its normal size, so they decided to go to a nearby emergency room.

They were admitted within 10 minutes, but Joe began to pass out when they were attempting to get his vital signs. He was quickly surrounded by emergency room personnel and taken to the last ER bed available. As a nurse, Teresa suspected Joe was in septic shock and told the ER physician. Joe immediately began treatment with antibiotics. A culture of his elbow revealed the Strep A virus, which was the likely cause of his flu-like symptoms prior to his elbow injury.

By 10:00 p.m., Joe's arm had tripled in size and he was sent for emergency surgery. That's when his doctors found the cause of the swelling: Joe had necrotizing fasciitis, better known as a "flesh-eating bacteria." The bacteria releases toxins that destroy the skin and membranes that surround the muscles. One in four people survive these infections, and those that do often require the amputation of a limb.

Joe spent six days in the intensive care unit and had five surgeries to remove the damaged tissue. Thankfully, doctors were able to save his arm. During that time, he needed two red cell transfusions to stay strong. Joe spent another six days in the hospital before his doctors would allow him to travel back to Phoenix.

But Joe was not out of the woods. He had to remove the bandages daily and utilized a Wound Vac to keep the infection from returning. Two months



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later, Joe received a skin graft to cover the area that was destroyed by the bacteria. Nearly 12 weeks after his ordeal started, Joe returned to work.

"I never realized the importance of regular blood donation until I had a life-threatening illness," Joe said. "I am so grateful to the O-negative blood donors who helped me make a full recovery."

Now a regular blood donor, Joe is glad that he has an opportunity to give back to help other people facing a health crisis. "Because O-negative blood is the universal donor, I feel it's critical for me to provide as many donations as I can."

Joe lives with his family in Phoenix.

### Testimonial Summary

**Injury/Illness:** Necrotizing Fasciitis

**Treatment:** Red Cell Transfusions

**\*MAX Donor Match:** Power Red

**Red Cell**

2

**Platelets**

0

**Plasma**

0

\* MAX Donors give automated donations of specific blood components.



**United Blood Services**

[www.UnitedBloodServicesAZ.org](http://www.UnitedBloodServicesAZ.org)