

## SEPARATION A SUCCESS

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 04 November 2011 13:59

---



**Angelica Sabuco, 2, right, and her twin sister Angelina play together. (Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP)**

## SEPARATION A SUCCESS

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 04 November 2011 13:59

---

Ex-conjoined twin girls are doing well

PALO ALTO, Calif. — Angelica and Angelina Sabuco, the two-year-old twin girls born connected at the chest and abdomen, successfully underwent a 10-hour separation surgery Tuesday at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford.

"We are very pleased," said one of the surgeons, Dr. Gary Hartman, according to the hospital.

"It could not have gone better."

"I thank God for everything; words cannot express how the family feels for the successful separation of our twins, Angelica and Angelina," said the girls' mother Ginady Sabuco.

Earlier in the day, another surgeon, Dr. Matias Bruzoni, said "the liver was the toughest part."

The girls shared the liver, diaphragms, breast bones and the muscles of the chest and abdominals walls.

Doctors said the fact the girls' hearts are separate apart from the tips made the operation safer and easier.

Reconstructing the girls' chest and abdominal walls went smoother than expected, and the only physical reminder of their ordeal will be a long scar from the chest to the bellybutton.

## SEPARATION A SUCCESS

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 04 November 2011 13:59

---

They are now being sedated in the pediatric intensive care unit.

They will spend the next few days there, and then move to a regular hospital room.

After that, they will head home to San Jose, Calif., with their family.

While their mother is overjoyed the surgery went well, it was an agonizing two-year journey from learning her babies were conjoined to seeing them finally able to live as two separate little girls.

She found out her baby girls were joined at the chest and abdomen, a condition called thoraco-omphalopagus, when she was seven months pregnant.

The news was even tougher to take because at the time, she and her son were living in the Philippines while her husband was working in San Jose.

“I was asking God, Why us, why me?” said Sabuco, according to Packard Children’s Hospital.

Sabuco and her children came to the U.S. in September 2010, and a couple of months later, doctors at Packard Children’s started evaluating the girls.

After months of tests and preliminary procedures, doctors say the twins were ready for separation surgery, but warned that if one twin died, the other would die within hours.

While the hospital wouldn’t discuss the cost of the surgery, they said part of the expenses were paid for by the family’s medical insurance.

## SEPARATION A SUCCESS

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 04 November 2011 13:59

---

Once the girls are back home, Sabuco looks forward to their being two very ordinary twin sisters.

“Angelica is more talkative and Angelina’s a silent type,” Sabuco told the hospital before the surgery.

“The girls love to play ‘mommy and baby’ with each other and listen to stories and music.”

Doctors say the twins need to be separated in order to prevent future health problems, including muscular and skeletal deformities and the psychological stresses of being conjoined.

According to Packard Children’s, only about six separation surgeries are done every year in the U.S.

Most conjoined twins never survive pregnancy, and only about 25 percent of those who are born will live.

ABC News reported back in September that there have only been about two dozen sets of conjoined twins in the world who were successfully separated.

Angelica and Angelina beat the odds, and doctors expect them to grow into normal little girls.

“They’re very resilient,” Hartman said.

“The long-term prognosis is that we would expect a happy, healthy set of girls. We don’t see any barriers to a complete recovery.”