

SURVIVOR STORIES

Lorraine's Story

Heart Attack Survivor

Lorraine Coulot – Auburn, Maine

While going to visit a relative at the hospital, Lorraine Coulot noticed she was having a hard time breathing as she walked across the parking area and thought there was something wrong with her lungs. She felt as though she could blow out air but could not breathe in enough. This symptom progressed over the next couple of weeks.

One day she noticed a pain in the middle of her chest - a burning, stinging, picky sensation. Lorraine just figured if she was having a heart attack that it would have knocked her over - like you see on TV. She called her doctor the next morning and was told to come in for an EKG and sent for a cauterization. This is when something was noticed. Lorraine has since received four stents in her RCA (right coronary artery).

Lorraine reports being pleased with the care she received and having a caring gentle cardiologist. She is doing well and has just had a checkup but says that she is scared every time she has any off feeling in her chest area. Her cholesterol is a "tad bit high" but she's relieved that she is doing good enough that her cardiologist doesn't want to see her again until next year.

Even though it takes up a lot of her time, Lorraine attends cardiac rehab to get some activity, education, and socialization. She says that she likes it because it makes her feel better and more energetic. She hopes to continue being active even when she completes her cardiac rehab because she knows she needs to maintain her ticker.

Lorraine admits that coping with heart disease is scary, plus she has diabetes. She never expected to have heart issues as there is no family history of heart disease. Lorraine reports feeling tired and that sometimes she doesn't sleep at night but says that she has a really great friend for support as well as family.

She considers herself lucky and shares a story about riding in the ambulance. As she was lying on the stretcher on the way to the hospital after the cauterization showed cardiac problems, Lorraine was asked by the EMT if she wanted them to revive her if by chance something were to happen. Her response was "yes." It was then that she realized just how serious her situation actually was. "What is so scary about all of this is you never know."

Lorraine says “I could have died” and recalls the feeling of going to a strange hospital and not really knowing what was wrong.

Lorraine says that she has realized from all of this that you never know what will happen from day to day. She is thankful for being alive and would like to tell other women that may be at risk to “keep moving” and be active even if you don’t do it well - just do it. Being active can reduce the risk of another cardiac episode and help reduce your blood sugar even if you don’t lose weight.