

The Heart Beat

The Big One That, Luckily, Got Away

Tom York, a carpenter and outdoorsman, is a stout-hearted man. When his wife of 50 years underwent major surgery for an aortic aneurysm, he was by her side. It was while concentrating on her welfare and caring for her at home that he began experiencing chest pain.

"I went to go upstairs, and I knew something was wrong," York said. "I wanted to be there for my wife, but she made me go to the doctor's the next day." His doctor performed an EKG and immediately detected a problem.

"I was sent directly to Summa's Akron City Hospital," said York, "and, to make a long story short, I came home 10 days later – with a seven-way bypass."

An avid fisherman, York was more than happy that this time the "big one" – a heart attack – got away.

His doctors were able to clear the blockage before he experienced a heart attack. According to York, he felt weak after his surgery, but Summa's cardiac rehab program helped get him back on track.

"Those people are fantastic. They put you through your paces, but all the time you feel secure. That's because they really watch and test you," said York. "My son recently had a heart attack, at 41, and because my experiences were so positive, I was able to help him." Due in part to Summa's cardiac program and mostly because of his determination, York is not about to be slowed down by a "mere" seven-way heart bypass.

"I help my son, who now runs the family business, York Builders," he said, "and I love to pheasant hunt and fish. And, of course, I still love carpentry."

Q: My sister and I have both been diagnosed with a heart condition called mitral valve prolapse (MVP). Her cardiologist recommends that she take antibiotics prior to dental work, but mine does not recommend this for me. Why?

A: MVP is usually an innocent abnormality of the mitral valve in the heart. However, some types of MVP are at higher risk for developing a potentially serious infection of the inner lining of the heart and heart valves called bacterial endocarditis. During dental procedures, bacteria residing in the oral cavity may enter the blood stream, some of which remain alive for up to 20 minutes before our body disposes of them. People with heart structure defects, including valve problems, may have a higher risk of bacteria damaging these heart tissues. Only defects severe enough to pose an increased risk of infection require antibiotics prior to dental procedures. This is a decision made by your physician based on a thorough analysis of your individual condition.

Kenneth E. Berkovitz, M.D.
Cardiologist
Summa Health System

What's Up, Doc?

Cardiac Rehab Phase IV

Summa's supervised exercise program for adults with heart conditions is offered at Akron City Hospital at the following times. A physician referral is required.

Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:30 to 8 p.m. (330) 375-4472

Cardiac Rehab Phase IV

Summa also offers cardiac rehab IV at the Akron Jewish Community Center. Please call the facility directly for more information or to register. A physician referral is required.

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11 a.m. to noon (330) 867-7850

For information on these programs and others, call Summa's Cardiac Rehab Center at (330) 375-4472, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Summa's
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