



Janine Krolikowski – Heart Attack Survivor

Janine knew all about the heart and heart disease. She worked as an ultrasound technician for most of her life and lost both of her parents to heart disease at a young age. Yet despite her knowledge and family history, she shrugged her own symptoms off.

One week prior to her heart attack, Janine felt a pain between her shoulder blades.

"I told myself I must have pulled a muscle when I was doing my yard work."

Even as the pain began to worsen, Janine's denial grew. But when the pain wrapped all the way around her chest and she became clammy, sweaty and started vomiting, she finally admitted something serious was happening. Even then, instead of immediately going to the hospital, Janine took an aspirin and slowly began getting ready for the day.

"After I took the aspirin, my symptoms subsided enough that I took a shower, did my makeup, did my hair and got ready to go to the doctor."

Janine drove herself to the doctor, who immediately sent her to the ER. Once there, an abnormal blood test led to an ultrasound of Janine's heart using the same type of machine she used at work. That's when she knew.

"The minute the technician came in and put the probe down on my chest, I knew immediately that I had had a heart attack."

Janine received a stent, but to her, the healing process that began after the heart attack was more difficult than the attack itself. Depression set in.

"The realization of what you have gone through hits home and you slow down and process it. There were times I was really down."

Scared, Janine imagined herself following in her parents' footsteps.

"I was basically in the same position they were in and I didn't think I would make it. I thought this was the end."

Fortunately, Janine found the spirit to take her life in a different direction.

"I decided I would take control, exercise and do what the doctor said because I was going to be a survivor."

Janine believes her life never really began until after her heart attack. Now healthy, she exercises regularly and works each and every day to maintain a heart-healthy diet.

"As women, we try to control everything. We live in the future and in the past. We need to stop and live in the moment, capture what's happening right now."

Janine Goes Red for her parents.