

Roger's story

It is some 27 years when I was 40 I had my first and most damaging infarction, over the following 10 years I had two more infarctions. Then when I was 50 I had a triple by-pass operation.

In early 2009 I had an ICD fitted following an annual check-up at hospital when they discovered the problem during the routine CT scan. This was particularly disappointing as the previous year an Angiogram had shown my by-passes to be fine.

Prior to my CT scan I had felt fine however as I had lived with a heart problem for so many years and had no warning symptoms prior to any event. The deterioration in my condition must have been very gradual and had not greatly impacted on my life so I did not recognise there was a problem.

On my father's side of the family over two generations there have been 5 heart related deaths including my father and I lost my younger brother who was 5 years my junior when he was 52. My message would be to check your family history.

The background to the start of my heart issue is that I also suffer with Asthma which may have masked the heart problem. The first infarction happened only a few weeks after my father's unexpected death plus at the time I smoked and had a stressful job plus too many 2/3 hour lunches. I thought I was fit playing squash and golf once a week and invincible.

That first infarction event happened while we were on holiday in Spain with our two children and my mother and my poor wife had to endure an hour long ambulance drive to the hospital in Alicante. After a couple of weeks my mother and children were flown back to the UK, my wife and I were eventually flown home 4 weeks later in an air ambulance.

I did not learn, although I never smoked again and ate healthier I still had the stressful job and for the company travelled extensively in India and the US, my sport activity was modified to badminton and golf. This carried on for another five years then the second infarction when the whole family with friends were enjoying a relaxing day at a steam rally.

My wife insisted understandably that I change my job which I did, and as my position in my new company developed I had more overseas travel and considerable stress. Eventually I had my third infarction on the golf course, it was a very cold frosty morning after five holes I recognised that things were not right and with the help of my golf partner we managed to walk slowly off the golf course. The hospital confirmed that I had another infarction.

Today there is so much more healthy heart info available than when I had my three events. For me the GP's were not that helpful, the only medication I was advised to take was half an aspirin a day. It was not until after my by-pass operation did I start receiving other medications and a Coro-Nitro Pump Spray.

You can't have failed to notice that all three of my events happened when I was relaxing but prolonged stress is damaging.

Because of my experience I strongly feel that it is not only the general public that needs advice so do the GP's.