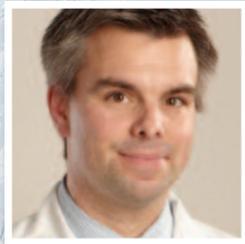


THERAPEUTIC HYPOTHERMIA

Amy Watkins' heart broke – literally.



Dr. Henry Riter, Cardiologist
Cedar Rapids Heart Center, PC

The 51-year-old was eating lunch one minute and unconscious the next when her heart simply stopped working correctly. Thankfully, she was surrounded by people at Van Meter, Cedar Rapids, where she works through a temporary placement agency as a Purchasing Assistant.

She was fortunate one of those people was Chris Weininger, a truck driver for Van Meter who also is an Emergency Medical Technician with the Hiawatha Fire Department. While Chris performed CPR, another co-worker called 9-1-1. Immediate CPR saved Amy's brain tissue by getting oxygen to her brain cells.

Area Ambulance was on the way – the first of many steps in a coordinated care process that saved Amy's life. Paramedics twice shocked her heart and she was rushed to Mercy's

Emergency Department on Oct. 26, 2012.

A therapeutic hypothermia, or cooling, protocol was initiated at Mercy by a team from the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Center (ICC) and Cardiology.

A therapeutic hypothermia cooling protocol was initiated at Mercy's Emergency Department.

The procedure was developed by Mercy Medical Center and Cedar Rapids Heart Center, PC, and is an important therapy for a comatose survivor of cardiac arrest who received CPR. Endorsed by the American Heart Association, patients are sedated and their body

temperature is lowered to between 90 to 93 degrees F (normal body temperature is 98.6 degrees F) via chilled intravenous fluids, cooling wraps and ice packs.

Cardiologist Henry Riter, C.R. Heart Center, was instrumental in establishing this life-saving protocol that protects the brain and other vital



Amy Watkins is thankful for the quick actions of co-worker Chris Weininger, who also is an Emergency Medical Technician with the Hiawatha Fire Department. Chris performed CPR on Amy when she fell down unconscious at a work luncheon at Van Meter, Cedar Rapids. He received a Life Saving Award from the Cedar Rapids Fire Department for his efforts.

organs by lowering oxygen requirements, decreasing swelling and limiting the release of toxins that can cause cells to die. After 24 hours, patients are warmed slowly over a 12-hour time period. Cardiac arrest is a very critical illness and there is no guarantee that recovery is possible. Thankfully, in Amy's case, it worked perfectly.

Amy, who lives in Anamosa and also works evenings at a Lindale Mall store, was closely monitored in the ICC during the cooling therapy. A CT scan of her head revealed no damage to her brain and testing in the cardiac cath lab showed more good news – her arteries were clear. When Amy was brought out of the medically induced coma, she was found to be neurologically intact. Two days later, she was sitting in a chair smiling.

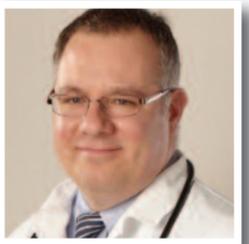
Three days later, an Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD) was inserted. The device enables Amy to send wireless transmissions (called interrogations) of her heart activity to C.R. Heart Center from home. Today, she continues to receive care from C.R. Heart Center under the watchful eye of Cardiologist Nick Hodgman, who has prescribed blood

pressure medication to help relieve pressure on her heart.

She was back on the job two weeks later and continues to feel fine. "Everyone is shocked I am walking around," she says. "They all say it was scary to watch. Chris, who gave me CPR, stops in to say hi all the time. But it really feels like it happened to somebody else."

At first Amy couldn't pinpoint any major stressors in her life that could have contributed to her illness. After some contemplation, however, she offers, "I was stressed all year – I was laid off in January (2012). And, I'd had a wellness exam before my insurance ran out, which resulted in a health scare that later turned out fine, but left me with a lot of big bills. I didn't find work until May, when I began working part-time in retail. Now, I'm working a temporary job, which is a bit unsettling."

On the days she works both jobs, Amy leaves her home at 6:45 a.m., returning at 10 p.m. While the stress and long work hours may have contributed to her cardiac arrest, an exact cause has not been pinpointed. Amy says not knowing is scary, but the ICD gives her peace of mind.



Dr. Nick Hodgman, Cardiologist
Cedar Rapids Heart Center, PC