

Shannon Engel- ADULT FMD

February 9, 2010 turned out to be an evening that I'd never forget. For those of you who don't know me, let me introduce myself - my name is Shannon Engel, I am 37 years old, have been married for 15 years and have two great kids. I live an active, healthy lifestyle and had recently got involved in triathlon training. So when I started getting chest pains that night, I couldn't figure out what could be the cause of that kind of discomfort and went to bed (seriously). I woke up feeling a little better that next morning but I have to admit, when my left arm kept falling off the steering wheel while driving to work, I thought it was more than a little odd but I still couldn't rationalize what was happening to me. It wasn't until I got to the office and began working that my chest pain came back and I decided it was time to walk myself next door to the West Lincoln Memorial Emergency Department.



I don't remember much after that, except the shocked reaction of the nurse I had every time one of my test results came back and confirmed that I was suffering a heart attack. I was moved to ICU and was in shock while listening to the urgency of the medical staff as they made arrangements for me to be transferred to the Hamilton General Hospital for further testing. And that is when I met, Dr. Christopher Buller.

I remember Dr. Buller introducing himself to me after reviewing my chart and explaining that I would be going in for an angiogram. It was during that time Dr. Buller could see that there was a healed dissection of a larger artery and the dissection of this second artery is what caused the heart attack. He checked my kidney and didn't see anything of concern and was then diagnosed with coronary FMD. Fortunately for me, Dr. Buller is a specialist in FMD and had recently moved to Ontario from living out west and just happened to be on call that day. It's through careful monitoring, medication and reduced physical activity that I am (sometimes reluctantly) learning to live with this disease. What I find most difficult now is mentally being more than ready to go back to my lifestyle of running, swimming and biking but realizing my physical limitations.

With these kinds of odds on my side, I would have preferred to have bought a lottery ticket but I can honestly say that there is not a day that goes by that I don't thank God for my good fortune. I just celebrated my second 'birthday' on February 9, 2011 and hope for many more!

Sincerely,

Shannon Engel