

Patricia (Pat) Smith

Pat Smith, age 64, has always led an active lifestyle, dedicating her time to exercising and sports, playing with her grandchildren and teaching classes at her local university in Rhode Island. Although heart disease was not a foreign concept to Smith – who lost a husband in his 40s and a son in his 30s to heart attacks – she never considered herself at risk because her weight, cholesterol and blood pressure levels were very healthy.

One weekend in 2005 after caring for six of her grandchildren, Smith began to feel an odd, fluttering sensation and tingling in her arm. Throughout the week she treated the recurring sensation with aspirin until she mentioned to her daughter-in-law that she suspected she was having panic attacks. Smith's daughter-in-law encouraged her to go to the hospital right away, because her symptoms sounded similar to those of her late son.

Smith's doctor informed her that she had experienced a minor heart attack several days earlier, despite feeling no chest pain. Even worse, she was at risk for a more serious attack due to two significant blockages in one of the arteries leading to her heart. An interventional cardiologist told Smith about a clinical trial to test a new drug eluting stent, a treatment for coronary artery disease. She was happy to participate in the trial in which she would receive follow-up care and contribute to the advancement of heart disease treatment.

Smith's blocked artery was treated with the XIENCE™ V Everolimus Eluting Coronary Stent System and she was able to resume teaching just two days after the procedure. Currently, she feels great and has continued all of the physical activities that she enjoys. Smith feels very lucky that the blockages in her artery were detected before she had a major heart attack. Based on her experience, she emphasizes that women may be innate caregivers but need to take notice of their own health and anything that does not feel right. "Know your baseline," she says. "When you don't feel well, you need to pay attention and rule out the possibility of a larger health problem."

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