

October 25, 2016

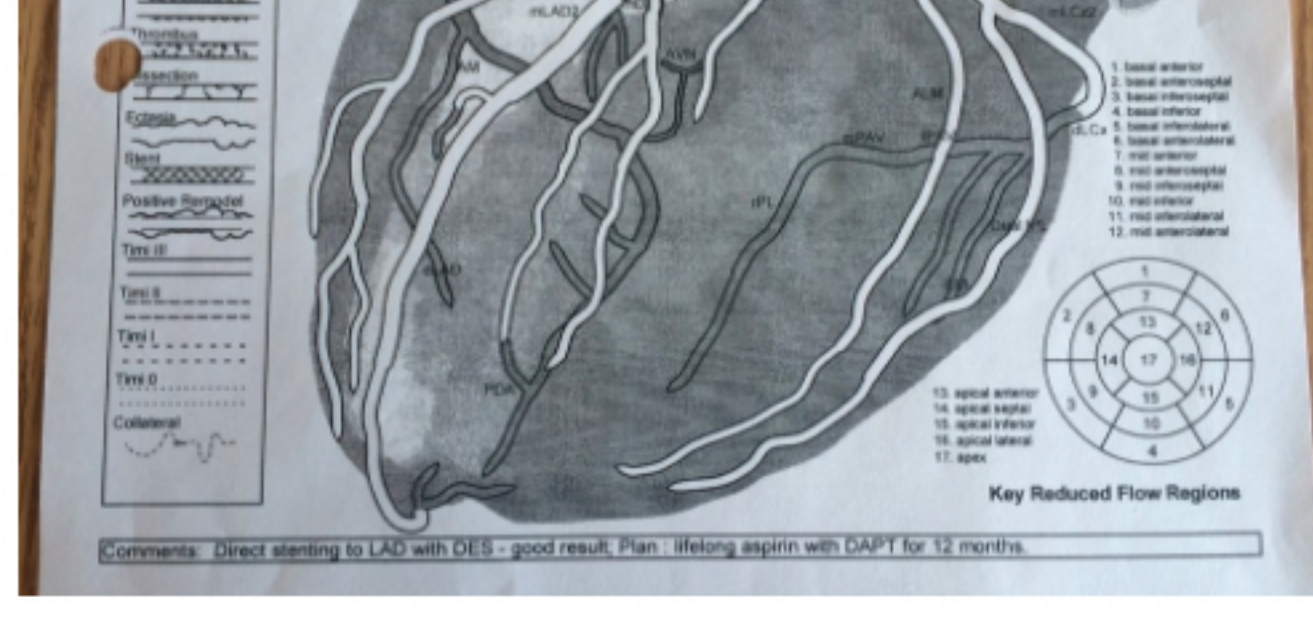
HEART, GENERAL HEALTH, INNOVATION, VASCULAR

Life-changing heart attack

An important part of recovery is how hospital staff support patients for discharge

"As soon as I hit the doors, I know I'll want a cigarette," says Jason Vennard, who, after 22 years, has to give up smoking, drinking alcohol and unhealthy eating habits.

At only 40 years old, Jason suffered a heart attack.



A stent was inserted into one of Jason's arteries that was 70 per cent blocked. To prevent the 50 per cent blockage from getting worse, Jason has to take new medication, diet and exercise.

He had been working outside all day and became hot and nauseated. "I thought it was really bad heatstroke and felt like I was going to pass out." He decided to go home and relax on the couch.

Later that night, things took a turn for the worse. "I started getting chest pain like someone was pushing their knuckles into my chest as hard as they could. My arms got really heavy and it felt like growing pains." When Jason's fiancée returned home, she rushed him to the **Edson Healthcare Centre**.

Over the next six hours, the staff figured out

what was wrong, stabilized Jason and sent him by ambulance to the **Misericordia Community Hospital**.

Jason spent a number of days on the Coronary Care unit meeting with different specialists and undergoing various tests and procedures. He travelled to the **Royal Alexandra Hospital** to have a stent inserted into one of the blockages in his heart.

Before his heart attack, Jason didn't have a history of heart issues and wasn't on any medication. He's now on five new medications and the nicotine patch.

To help keep track of a patient's pre-admission home medications, the Misericordia has implemented a Medication Reconciliation (MedRec) program. "MedRec is a way to ensure that changes to the home medications are carefully assessed, documented and ultimately explained to the patient just prior to discharge from the hospital," states Kinnson Lo, Project Pharmacist for the MedRec Implementation Project.

Jason admits there's a lot to take in, but his care team—which consists of a physician, dietitian, respiratory therapist and pharmacist—helped him navigate his post-heart attack recovery. The team created a medication discharge plan and resources for Jason to follow up with once he's back home.

Kinnson says patients are an integral part of the medical decision-making process. "Discharging from hospital can be a stressful time, so it is very important that they are involved in the discharge plan. They need to understand what medications are new or changed, proper use of medications, how to monitor for side-effects, and whether followup testing is required. It's a lot to absorb, which is why the patient needs that discharge teaching and the medication discharge plan on paper."



One of Jason's new medications is nitroglycerin. The next time he has chest pain, he can spray some onto or under his tongue.



Kinnson Lo (left), Project Pharmacist, ensures that Jason understands all the content in his discharge information package.

The Canadian Patient Safety Institute (**CPSI**) and Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada (**ISMPCanada**) have released a new initiative called **5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications**. It highlights five key questions patients should be asking their doctor, nurse or pharmacist to ensure they understand their medication treatment plan. "We want patients to be confident in managing their own health," says Kinnson.

Jason says the process was well-organized and that he feels prepared to go home. "The staff took all the guessing out of things. Now, I don't have to worry." He says he understands the medication, diet and exercise changes

that need to happen to ensure he stays healthy. Friends and family say Jason's heart attack was an "awakening" and have made changes to their own lives.

"It's a complete lifestyle change," admits Jason. "But if I don't do it, next time I might not be sitting here."

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS when you see your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

1. CHANGES?

Have any medications been added, stopped or changed, and why?

2. CONTINUE?

What medications do I need to keep taking, and why?

3. PROPER USE?

How do I take my medications, and for how long?

4. MONITOR?

How will I know if my medication is working, and what side effects do I watch for?

5. FOLLOW-UP?

Do I need any tests and when do I book my next visit?



Keep your medication record up to date.

Remember to include:

- ✓ drug allergies
- ✓ vitamins and minerals
- ✓ herbal/natural products
- ✓ all medications including non-prescription products

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to review all your medications to see if any can be stopped or reduced.

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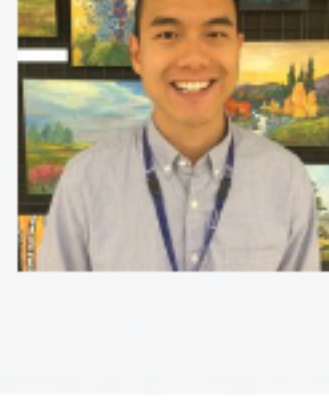


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EXPERTS



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Kinnson is a pharmacist at the Misericordia Community Hospital.

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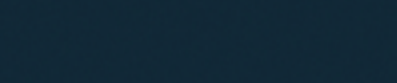


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