

The Wareham Family Part 5: Bride Wareham

Bride had always been healthy but lately she has been feeling a bit concerned about left sided chest discomfort she is experiencing. It has occurred while bending over picking up the laundry basket and while walking up the stairs. She felt a bit weak and overcome with the episodes and sometimes feels her heart racing.

Initially, she brushed it off as being out of shape or change of life symptoms. She thought her these episodes as well as her poor sleep has been poor and constipation were minor things related to getting older. When she had an episode of chest pain waking her from her sleep and lasting about an hour, she was very worried. She remembered her grandfather had angina and a heart attack, and wondered if this could be happening to her. She woke Anthony and he insisted they go to the emergency department.

When she arrived at the ER, her blood pressure and heart rate were elevated. She told the triage nurse her symptoms and immediately had blood work, EKG and chest X-ray completed. She was put on the heart monitor and given oxygen. Not long after her chest pain had resolved.

The ER doctor told Bride that her ECG was normal and showed no evidence of a heart attack. Her chest X-ray showed a small "shadow" on the right lung. When asked about the nature of her pain, Bride told the doctor how it came on with activity until tonight when it woke her from sleep. Bride always had yearly check-ups with her family doctor and as far as she knew everything had been good. She noted that her grandfather had heart disease but no one else in the family had any issues. She had been taking some hormone replacement therapy to help with her menopausal symptoms of hot flashes. Despite the doctor's reassurance, Bride still felt very worried while she waited for her blood work to come back. She knows that she had gained some weight this past year and was not as physically active as she once was.

Bride's blood work results were all normal. Bride was glad she did not have a heart attack but she was still concerned. What should she do if the pain comes back? If not her heart then what is causing the pain? She posed these questions to the ER doctor who told her it could be a number of things and to follow-up with her family doctor for any further investigations.

Bride's family doctor saw her urgently and arranged for some investigations to further assess for cardiovascular risk. Subsequently, the pain only reoccurred a few more times and was not as severe. Bride was relieved when all of her investigations came back normal with the exception of her cholesterol profile. Her family doctor arranged for Bride to see the dietician and planned to start medication for her high cholesterol if it did not improve with diet, weight loss and exercise. Bride was determined to make this better without medication. She had heard many negative things about cholesterol pills and did not want to take them.