The Heart of Haynes and Boone: Health Tips From One of Our Own

By Randall Brown | September 30, 2020

As part of our "Heart of Haynes Boone" campaign, we are sharing stories about heart health awareness from some of our own people. The following is a story about Partner Randy Brown.

Randy was the picture of health in 2015, cycling near his Dallas home several times per week, pushing himself physically, and planning regular hiking trips in the deserts of Utah and Arizona.

That December, after finishing a routine 12-mile ride around White Rock Lake, something seemed off. His heart was racing, and he didn't feel well. He laid down on the floor – which he often did after a strenuous ride.

At his wife's request, Randy agreed to go to the Emergency Room, where he lost consciousness. The ER team had to shock his heart twice to bring it back to a normal rhythm and found that Randy had ventricular tachycardia (VT), which is a fast, abnormal heart rate.

This was the beginning of Randy's edification on heart health and his quest to learn all he could about his dangerous health condition. This involved regular visits with a cardiologist, stress tests and constant monitoring. "There were months of uncertainty and scary times," he said.

The doctors ultimately determined that Randy has sarcoidosis, an inflammatory disease that affects multiple organs in the body, and first-degree heart failure. This April, Randy received an internal defibrillator and a pacemaker.

"I would often say, 'I don't get sick.' For quite a long time, that was the case. In the past couple of years, I had pneumonia, then the flu, and then a lasting respiratory infection," Randy said. "The doctor suggested doing some tests, and they confirmed I had sarcoidosis."

Randy's illness isn't debilitating and doesn't limit what he can do. In fact, the doctors have advised him to continue exercising, adding that his history of strong physical health is benefitting him today.

But the past five years have changed some things for Randy: "I'm treating myself a lot better these days in terms of how much sleep I am getting. I used to be someone who'd get by on four to five hours of sleep because I could and because I had a very busy schedule. Now I'm more in the seven- to nine-hour range, and I feel a lot better. I am doing my best to keep up with my exercise and eat better – and eliminate carbs. Losing 10-15 pounds will help my heart."

He is also now a big advocate of walking as a form of exercise.

"It's wonderful exercise and is the easiest way to accomplish that objective of getting in shape," he said. "I now walk with my wife about four miles every morning in a little over an hour. That's a dedicated hour that we are talking to each other, so it's also great for our relationship."

Randy hopes his story might prompt someone in the HB family to get in shape and live a healthier lifestyle.

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“Your chances of being able to fight off disease and live a normal life are much better if you maintain a healthy diet, exercise and get plenty of sleep,” he said.

Here are a few other tidbits of advice from Randy: “Get your annual exams; have a positive outlook on your life; and be kind to yourself and everyone else – it’s good for your heart.”

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