

Coordinated Care Stops Cardiac Problem Quickly

No matter the time of year, Manasquan resident Jack Kane, 47, can be found navigating the bike trails in Allaire State Park at least three times a week. Even this past New Year's Eve, he and some friends took to the snowy paths on their mountain bikes for one of their regular 6- to 10-mile adventures.

But Jack started feeling different during this ride. First there was pressure in his chest, which he wrote off as the cold air hitting his lungs. Then he started to experience uncomfortable pressure in his wrist. He decided to break from the group and head home.

The discomfort came and went over the next four days. It became especially bothersome at night, and he eventually heeded his girlfriend's requests to get medical help.

Jack had previously been to Ocean Care Center, a satellite emergency department (ED) in Point Pleasant that is run by Ocean Medical Center. He decided to go there again for care, and once he arrived and described his symptoms, he was seen immediately by Santos Gonzales, M.D.

An electrocardiogram (EKG) was performed, which shows how electrical impulses pass through heart muscle. During a heart attack, damaged heart muscle prevents the electrical impulse from passing through. Jack's EKG did not show an active heart attack, but the doctor was still suspicious.

"Jack had elevated blood pressure, arm pain, and chest pain," says Dr. Gonzales. "Because of these symptoms, plus his



A life-threatening heart attack gave cyclist Jack Kane some food for thought. He was already active but now recognizes the importance of eating right, too. As owner of Harpoon Willy's in Manasquan, he brought that increased awareness to the restaurant's chefs and servers.

family history of heart disease, I knew it was important to get him to the main ED for more extensive evaluation and treatment."

An ambulance transported Jack to Ocean Medical Center. Shortly after arriving, Jack's symptoms intensified. Dr. Gonzales' instincts were right. A second EKG showed life-threatening damage to Jack's heart muscle.

Jack was prepared for emergency angioplasty, a minimally invasive procedure in which a catheter is inserted into the artery at the groin and threaded to the heart. The blocked artery is then opened with a balloonlike device, and a stent is inserted to keep the artery open.

Cardiologist David Pinnelas, M.D., spoke with Jack while performing the procedure, and in just 81 minutes, Jack was in recovery. "I was awake the whole time," recalls Jack. "It was a painless and amazingly easy

procedure. As soon as the blockage was removed, I felt better. If I had been allowed, I felt well enough to get up and go home."

"It's so important to recognize symptoms and get medical help immediately," advises Dr. Pinnelas. "Time lost is damage to the heart tissue."

Jack went home a few days later and was back to mountain biking in two weeks. He continues to have an active lifestyle but is now more selective with food choices to further help his heart.

And as an owner of Harpoon Willy's restaurant in Manasquan, Jack has taken his health awareness one step further. "We've always offered flexibility with our menu, but we are now more aware of altering ingredients or cooking styles to accommodate the health needs of patrons," says Jack. "The bottom line is that this can happen to anybody." ■ — Donna Sellmann

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Attend a special lunch or dinner this summer in the name of heart health. Delicious meal choices are on the menu, sprinkled with valuable heart health information from a clinical expert. See page 20 for details.