



Interview with Lisa and Tommy

Lisa's Heart Condition and Stroke

Lisa had one transient ischemic attack (TIA) in September 2016 and a full stroke in October 2019. After the TIA, she experienced dizziness but felt fine after two weeks and went back to work. She went for follow-up at Georgetown University Hospital where doctors discovered Lisa had a hole in her heart. She was not a candidate for closure, so she was prescribed aspirin as a blood thinner. The stroke in October 2019 was more severe, leading to hospitalization at the Washington Hospital Center, where the hole in her heart was closed.

Lisa's Stroke at DSW Store

Lisa described the events leading up to her stroke, which occurred while she was at a DSW in Bethesda, Maryland. She had been experiencing a severe headache for several days and had a vision disturbance during a spin class. On the day of the stroke, she felt nauseous and vomited outside the DSW before being taken to Suburban Hospital and later transferred to Georgetown. Tommy, who was in North Carolina at the time, rushed to be by her side. After being treated at Georgetown Hospital, Lisa underwent rehabilitation at ARH (Adventist Rehab Hospital) for 12 days before having a PFO closure procedure at Washington Hospital Center. The medical team at Georgetown was praised for their care and support, and Lisa's spirits were noted as a key factor in her recovery process.

Lisa's Post-Stroke Recovery Journey

The group discussed Lisa's recovery from a cerebellar stroke, which affected her speech, balance, and memory. Lisa reported that her balance was generally good but sometimes problematic, her speech was mostly fine except for difficulties with the left side of her tongue, and her memory was good but



sometimes delayed. Tommy shared that Lisa had been prescribed antidepressants after the stroke to manage potential depression, which she initially resisted but later continued at a lower dose. The group also discussed how antidepressants can affect blood vessels and are not suitable for some stroke survivors, highlighting the importance of individualized treatment plans.

Stroke Recovery and New Career

Lisa shared her experience of having an ischemic stroke in October 2019, which led to her leaving her job in senior living after a 16-year career. She now works part-time for a company called Town and Country, packing belongings for older clients moving to senior communities. Lisa discussed her current medication, which includes a lower dose of escitalopram (Lexapro), and mentioned that physical activity, such as going to the gym, helps manage fatigue associated with her stroke recovery.

Lisa's Heart Condition Journey

The group discussed Lisa's medical condition, including a mysterious blood clotting issue that doctors haven't fully explained. Lisa and Tommy shared their experiences with the adjustment period after her medical treatment, noting how it affected their daily lives and required support from neighbors. The conversation concluded with Lisa recommending a book called "Suffer Strong" by Katherine Roche, which she found helpful.