



Speaking from Experience *Heart Surgery in Later Years*

Transcript for chapter 3 of 7: Discharged from hospital

John (61 years old, diagnosed with angina and had bypass 5 years ago) and

Margaret - Well, after I went home from hospital from the by-pass surgery, a couple of weeks you're not allowed to do anything; six weeks before you can actually drive a car. But from then on it was all go - it just gradually got back in to the normal routine of things. No lifting. But a couple of months after having by-pass surgery, I was back on the farm at harvest time actually driving tractors and doing general light farm work, but no heavy lifting.

Brian (70 years old, 18 and 7 years since bypass surgery) - After about a month, you're starting to feel as though I could go back to work, but it's better not to. It's better to ease yourself though it, increase your walking, and increase your diet a little bit more, because you're not all that keen on food for a little while. And after two months I know I really felt great.

Raymond (75 years old, 15 years since heart attack, 1 year since bypass surgery) - I spent a fortnight with my niece. And then one day I said, "Look, I think it's time I went home." Not that I felt that I was one hundred per cent capable, but I felt that I would - being an independent person - I felt that I would do better or recover if I got back into my own environment.

Shirley (59 years old. 2 years since bypass and corrective surgery for a defective heartbeat) and Brian - It wasn't until I went home, you suddenly feel on a downer and there were a few tears then, when I went home. I think it was the reaction of being away from home for such a long time and after all I'd been through. And probably the relief that everything was over and finished with. And then feeling helpless when I went home, that I couldn't do things for myself that I'd normally done. I was so dependent on Brian doing so many things for me in the house and that's quite depressing when you've been an independent person.

Larry (63 years old. 4 years since angioplasty, 2 years since bypass surgery) and Beryl - When someone comes home from hospital after a major operation, you're a little bit frightened that something might go wrong. Because while they're in hospital you know they have someone there attending to them all the time. Like, as if the lifeline has been broken and suddenly you're by yourself with that patient.

Joan (78 years old, heart condition at birth, 49 years since surgery to aorta, 1 year since bypass) - I'm very fortunate with nieces, sisters and wonderful friends. I was not on my own, not for one hour after I came home. I spent my life walking around with a small pillow, holding it to my chest to try and get some ease. I was absolutely in terrible pain. The doctors gave me medication which I did take and then I think I'd try and ease off and not take as much but then the pain was too excruciating.



Larry and Beryl - There was absolutely no way I could go off painkillers. The pain was excruciating if you had nothing to relieve the pain. So, I was on painkillers for about three months, but then after the three months, absolutely no pain at all.

Joan - After six weeks, no, I drove the car and started doing my own duties around my unit, except very special things which I had friends help me with. But, no, as far as cooking and that type of thing, no problems at all. It was so good to be back doing them.

Shirley and Brian - Probably two months I started gradually doing a little bit more. I'd lost a lot of confidence by this time. Even going to the supermarkets, I was afraid little children were going to come dashing up to me and knock into my chest and things like that. Driving in the car made me apprehensive. I felt very timid even being a passenger in the car. And I think it was just because it had been such a long period that I had not done these things, and it gave me fear in a lot of things that you do every day and do quite normally.