

# A cool way to help heart attack victims

## Hypothermia protocol a lifesaver

**W**hat a difference a year makes. About a year ago around this time, Terry Whitney, 53, was just returning to work for the first time since he suffered sudden cardiac arrest on the day after Thanksgiving.

Terry is the first to admit, he's fortunate to have survived his heart attack. According to the American Heart Association – there are no statistics available for the exact number of sudden cardiac arrests that occur each year. However, about 335,000 people a year die of heart disease without being hospitalized, which equates to about 918 Americans each day.

Terry defied the statistical odds, thanks in part to his fast-acting family and the care he received from doctors at St. Luke's.

"I don't remember much about Thanksgiving Day to be

perfectly honest," said Terry. "My family hosted it with the typical Thanksgiving meal. Shortly after midnight, I woke up with indigestion. I honestly thought it was from overindulging."

"I suggested we drive to the drugstore and get something for his upset stomach," said Erica Whitney-Kearns, 23, Terry's daughter. "After returning home, Dad took the medicine, started to feel better and rested on the sofa."

"The next morning I still wasn't feeling well," said Terry. "So Erica

suggested going to the hospital to get checked and that's the last thing I remember."

"He collapsed," said Erica. "I'm a former lifeguard and one of the things I had to learn was CPR and those lifesaving skills immediately kicked in; I called 9-1-1 and then started performing CPR. My fiancé, Josh, and I performed CPR until the police arrived with an automatic defibrillator."

Avid Hawkeye fans, Terry, Erica and Janet look forward to attending Iowa basketball games together this winter.





Naser Payvandi, MD  
cardiologist, Cardiologists, P.C.



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## Protecting the brain

Terry was rushed to St. Luke's Emergency Department. Following immediate evaluation in the ER, Terry was rushed to the Cardiac Catheterization Lab and the family was told he would need an emergency heart cath to determine the cause of his heart attack. Drs. Naser Payvandi and Michael Chandra performed a diagnostic heart cath and deployed a stent to open a blocked artery in Terry's heart.

While in the Cath Lab, Drs. Payvandi and Chandra decided Terry should undergo a procedure called therapeutic hypothermia.

"Studies indicate that in cases such as cardiac arrest, reducing the body's core temperature can significantly reduce the risk of long-term brain damage," said Naser Payvandi, MD, Cardiologists, P.C. "With therapeutic hypothermia, the patient's core body temperature is lowered to 91 degrees. This is done with cooling blankets, ice packs, wet towels and fans."

"The goal of therapeutic hypothermia is to lower the body temperature within two to four hours of the heart attack and maintain the lower body temperature for 24 hours," said Anthony Carter, MD, St. Luke's ER doctor.

"For some patients, cooling the body prevents further damage to the brain cells and allows the brain to hibernate," said Andrew Peterson, MD, neurologist, Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C. "The literature is mixed, but some people have a very good outcome after undergoing therapeutic hypothermia. When the patient is brought back to their normal body temperature I look at how long

it takes for them to wake up, talk and follow commands."

"I had limited knowledge about therapeutic hypothermia," said Janet Whitney, Terry's wife of over 30 years. "After the doctors explained this procedure, I wanted to do what was best for Terry's complete recovery and this seemed like the right choice."

After Terry's condition was stabilized and his temperature slowly returned to normal he awoke to see his very concerned and hopeful wife and daughter.

## Full recovery

"When Terry woke up he immediately recognized me," said Janet. "We had been praying for this moment and our prayers were answered. He comprehended right away that he was in the hospital recovering from a heart attack, but he kept asking some of the same questions about the details, as he could not remember them himself. He was having some short-term memory problems and it was a little overwhelming. Terry worked with several therapists and after a 13 day stay at St. Luke's, he was discharged."

"Dad was back," said Erica. "He was able to work through the short-term memory issues and in a short time he was back running his business."

"If a patient isn't responding when they are brought to the ER after a heart attack this protocol could save them," said Dr. Payvandi. "Terry is proof of that. St. Luke's was the first hospital in the state to use

therapeutic hypothermia about five years ago. It has helped many patients not only at St. Luke's, but across the country and is becoming standard care for sudden cardiac arrest patients."

"Terry's daughter and son-in-law saved his life," said Dr. Carter. "We always say time is muscle in the ER. If they hadn't performed CPR on him – I'm sure his outcome would have been a lot different."

"We feel so blessed," said Janet. "We believe we were sent to St. Luke's for a reason and we are grateful for the wonderful care he received. We are calling the Sunday morning that Terry woke up his resurrection."

"I went through cardiac rehabilitation at St. Luke's following my hospital release," said Terry. "I feel very fortunate that I don't have any long or short-term memory loss and feel like I have returned to my old self. I feel so lucky to have a second chance. I'm enjoying life's precious moments and even got to walk my daughter down the aisle on her wedding day last July."

St. Luke's Hospital is one of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals for heart care, based on results from an annual study. St. Luke's is the only hospital in eastern Iowa to earn this distinction.

**To learn more about  
St. Luke's Heart Care Services  
call 319/369-8909.**

Dr. Anthony Carter, in a St. Luke's ER critical care room that provides extra space for multiple doctors and nurses to care for critically ill patients.

