

# “Miracle” heart patient beats the odds despite major blockage

Lack of blood flow didn't damage heart of Peoria man

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SUN CITY, Arizona (Feb. 7, 2018) – Jeff Kezis is celebrating February Heart Month by going through cardiac rehab after surviving a heart attack that his doctors believe should have killed him.

It began in November when Kezis was rushed to Banner Boswell Medical Center in the middle of night. Weeks earlier, he had been told that his cholesterol was high. What he didn't know was that his left main coronary artery was completely blocked.

He was only getting a third of the normal blood flow to keep his heart pumping. And he had gone into cardiac arrest.

“He shouldn't have survived the ambulance ride,” said Vincent Nicchi, MD, an interventional cardiologist who has been practicing in Sun City and Sun City West for more than 30 years.

Instead, once at the hospital, medical staff rushed Kezis to one of its cardiac catheterization labs and quickly inserted a stent – a small metal tube that is placed inside a narrowed blood vessel to keep it open – into his blocked artery to help restore full blood flow to Kezis' heart.

Four days later, Kezis was well enough to leave the hospital. And less than a month later, he was on a treadmill starting the process of rehabilitation.

“His heart was unscathed. It was amazing,” Nicchi said. “In my practice, I have had lots of patients but I have never seen or heard anything like it. I call him my ‘miracle’ patient.””

Nicchi attributes Kezis' stunning lack of heart damage to the well-rehearsed teamwork of area emergency-medical transport and the hospital. “He really got the care he needed very quickly.”

Kezis, 57, is now undergoing cardiac rehab, including walking on a treadmill and watching his diet better, cutting back on the cheese, red meat and beer.

“As I tell people, I'm just glad to be on this side of the grass,” he said.