

J04 Medical Airplane Saves Life

January 2009

Intro: The first few months after a new baby comes home is a time of joy and wonder, but it can also be exhausting. That's why the woman you're about to meet didn't think twice about being tired and sometimes short winded. What she didn't know was that her heart was growing weak because of a rare condition that can happen after delivery. Suddenly, she collapsed. She needed to get to a major medical center fast, because her local hospital was not equipped to help her. An air ambulance from Mayo Clinic was her only chance at staying alive.

Video

Total running time 2:10

Audio

TANYA GINTHER'S SYMPTOMS STRUCK WHILE IN THE GARAGE PACKING THE CAR FOR A TRIP. "SHE SAT DOWN ON THE CONCRETE AND SAID SHE WAS TIRED AND LIGHT HEADED AND I DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON AND ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE JUST COLLAPSED." CARDIAC ARREST. TANYA'S HUSBAND MIKE CALLED 911 AND STARTED CPR. AN AMBULANCE CREW TOOK TANYA TO THE LOCAL HOSPITAL.

CG :20 to :31
Mike Ginther
Tanya's husband

“I WAS TOLD IF SHE STAYS IN BISMARCK SHE'LL DIE. IF YOU TAKE HER TO MAYO SHE'S PROBABLY GOING TO DIE, SHE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE. IF YOU CAN GET HER DOWN THERE SHE HAS A CHANCE.”

MIKE TOOK THAT CHANCE TO SAVE HIS WIFE AND MOTHER OF THEIR TWO CHILDREN.

TANYA'S HEART WAS FAILING BECAUSE OF A CONDITION CALLED PERIPARTUM CARDIO MYOPATHY THAT BEGAN AFTER HER SON WAS BORN. HER HEART BECAME ENLARGED AND COULD NOT PUMP BLOOD PROPERLY. DOCTORS INSERTED A BALLOON PUMP THOROUGH HER GROIN UP TO A MAIN ARTERY IN HER HEART. THE PUMP IS SYNCHRONIZED TO HER HEARTBEAT AND INFLATES AND DEFLATES TO HELP KEEP BLOOD

FLOWING. AN AIR AMBULANCE JET THAT COULD HANDLE THIS EQUIPMENT, MAYO MED AIR, WAS THE ONLY WAY SHE COULD MAKE IT TO MAYO CLINIC.

CG 1:06 to 1:10

Tim Alden

Flight nurse

“AT THAT TIME I DIDN’T THINK THERE WAS ANYWAY WE WERE GOING TO BE ABLE TO TRANSPORT HER OUT OF THERE.”

CG 1:11 to 1:15

Vivien Williams

Reporting

TANYA ARRESTED MULTIPLE TIMES DURING THE FLIGHT. THIS BALLOON PUMP KEPT HER ALIVE. WHEN THEY LANDED DOCTORS AT MAYO CLINIC IMPLANTED ANOTHER DEVICE TO KEEP HER HEART GOING WHILE SHE WAITED FOR A HEART TRANSPLANT.

“I MORE OR LESS JUST PRAYED AND ASKED FOR A CHANCE.”

MIKE AND TANYA GOT THAT CHANCE. HER HEART BEGAN TO RECOVER. THREE WEEKS AFTER BEING NEAR DEATH, SHE AND

MIKE WENT HOME TO THEIR CHILDREN. AND EVEN THOUGH TANYA DOESN'T REMEMBER ANY OF THIS, SHE WILL ALWAYS BE THANKFUL FOR THE TEAM THAT SAVED HER LIFE.

"IT'LL BE ONE OF THOSE FLIGHTS I'LL NEVER FORGET. SHE WAS SO SICK AND IT TOOK ALL OF US TO HELP SAVE HER LIFE AND YET THERE IS A GREAT ENDING."

FOR MEDICAL EDGE, I'M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Tanya's heart recovered significantly, but it still is not as strong as it was before she became ill. Doctors told her she may be fine for many years, or she may need additional treatment sooner. Right now she's able to be active and is living a full life with her family.

For more information on peripartum cardiomyopathy, visit our Website at...[STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.mayoclinic.org> or voice tag "mayoclinic.org" for more information.]