



WOMEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS

Facts On Fighting Heart Disease

(NAPSA)—Here's an inspiring and informative look at three women who refuse to take heart disease lying down. They hope others who hear their stories will help their own hearts' health.

Linda Roberts wasn't prepared for heart problems, despite a family history of the disease and chest pains that were beginning to take her breath away. "The doctor immediately called me in to his office and I thought, 'This isn't good news. He's not bringing me back in to say 'All right! You're healthy!'' I knew something had to be wrong," she said. Several weeks later, she had a stent implanted to open up a main heart artery. A stent is a tiny mesh tube that is inserted into coronary arteries to help hold vessels open and prevent blockage.

While Roberts wasn't prepared for heart troubles, Marian Ferdon saw them coming and still passed them by. Realizing she was having a heart attack, she deliberately drove past the hospital. "I didn't want to leave my car in the parking lot," she said. She went home, where friends took her for help. She now has four stents, three coated with medication to help discourage the reformation of plaque, which causes blockages.

Hope Byrnes' heart problems became clear after coming home from a dinner with what she thought was indigestion. She had cold sweats and chest pressure but waited until morning to go to the emergency room. Luckily, a doctor took one look at her and told her she was having a heart attack. An angiogram showed one of her arteries had a 95 percent blockage. It was repaired with a stent and she was treated to prevent further damage.



Women should be aware: You can have a heart attack without the "classic" symptoms.

Though it's viewed as a "man's disease," more women die of heart disease than do men, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health. Women don't always experience the "classic" symptoms. Instead, they can feel unexplained fatigue; nausea, clamminess, weakness or dizziness; pain in the upper back, neck, shoulders and jaw; or breathlessness, often without chest pain.

Fortunately, by choosing a low-fat diet balanced with moderate physical activity, women who have had heart attacks can still enjoy a normal life.

These stories are told through the National Speaking of Women's Health Foundation, a nonprofit organization that "educates women to make informed decisions about their health, well-being and personal safety"; provides free health information in Wal-Mart stores; and has a television show on the Lifetime *Real Women* network (check local listings). For more information, visit www.speakingofwomenshealth.com or call 1-866-SWH-INFO.