

February 7, 2010

Dear Dr. Adams and Staff,

My husband, Mark and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all so very much for the wonderful experience that you have provided to us during a very challenging time in my life. Without the incredible range of medical expertise, hospital care, service and follow up, I am confident that my open-heart surgery would not have been nearly as successful. However, it was an overwhelmingly huge success because it was done at Mt. Sinai with all of you as a team.

Three years ago, I was diagnosed with Mitral Valve Prolapse. Last year, I began to develop symptoms of extreme shortness of breath with minor daily activities and fatigue. During a routine checkup with my cardiologist, the doctor suggested that the echocardiogram may not be picking up the most severe of the prolapse and that I should have a Trans Esophageal Echocardiogram (TEE). After completing the TEE, the physician came out and told my husband that immediate surgery was needed and thus, we began the search to find Dr. Adams and staff.

We searched the internet and consulted with family for the best surgeons for this type of procedure, found Dr. Adams and called his office to discuss the possibility of making an appointment. The office staff was more than accommodating and fit us in for a consultation with Dr. Adams the very next day.

My consultation was with Dr. Adams and Dr. Chickwee. Both surgeons specifically articulated the problems with my mitral valve and how it would be fixed. At the conclusion of the consultation, we felt that it was in my best interest to book a surgery with him. Dr. Adams performs a large number of these specific types of heart surgeries per week and Mt. Sinai is considered a "Super Center" for heart surgeries and therefore I wanted to be in the best hands.

On surgery day, I was treated like I was the first priority and everything was explained thoroughly. Dr. Chickwee also came in to say hello before surgery. Although Dr. Adams was completing the valve repair, Dr. Chickwee was going to open and close my incision, so I asked if there was anything she could do to minimize the size of my scar so that I could wear dresses and bathing suits.

Of course I was very nervous, who would expect that at 28 years old I would have to have open-heart surgery! However, after a long day in the operating room (which I'm happy that I was under general anesthesia for) my operation was complete.

I was in the ICU for 4 days, as it took longer than expected to get the anesthesia out of my body and control my heart rate. However, all was fine and my valve was perfect! My husband and parents told me that the nurses in the ICU were constantly monitoring my vitals and almost never left their computers and my bedside. Because of them, I could be transferred into the cardiac step down unit where I continued to improve each day.

A few weeks after my surgery, I began cardiac rehab where I strengthened my heart and muscles again through walking, biking and very light amounts of weight bearing activities. After a few months of rehab, I was interviewed for an article in the *Rehabilitation* magazine called "Standing Strong." It was an article discussing the benefits of cardiac rehabilitation for people recovering from heart problems and surgery at any age. I have continued to heal over the past year and my scar looks amazing! I have been able to wear low cut tops, dresses and bathing suits just like any other girl.

Almost one year later, now at the age of 29, I am very lucky to have the opportunity to live my life again to the fullest with a healthy heart and a sincere gratitude to Dr. Adams and his staff of amazing physicians, nurses and staff. I will always have a special place in my heart for the wonderful professionals that I had taking care of me.

Warmest regards,


Stacey K