



Ashlee's Story

Ashlee, Heart Kid

I was diagnosed with a hole in the heart and pulmonary stenosis when I was just a tiny baby; after the Doctor picked up a heart murmur whilst investigating why I had blue lips and low weight gain. My parents said all I did as a baby was feed (very little) and sleep.

This was of course because of my ticker not working at 100% for my tiny body.

I waited until I was 3 to have my heart operation at the Royal Children's Hospital. It was to repair the hole and open up the valve with a mesh stent. It was a success! Although the next few years were plagued with croup and a lot of hospital stays in isolation. Even for a simple cold. Primary school was a bit of a challenge in regards to what I restricted to in terms of my heart condition. While all the kids were out doing cross country and sports days I was at home probably playing barbies!

The Doctor wouldn't allow me to participate in these events as I suffered from some shortness of breath and could sometimes get extremely tired just from doing day to day things.

When I reached high school I was on yearly appointments for my heart. It was all very stable, until one day at school I was in home-echo class and started to feel

really sweaty. I felt my heart pounding out of my chest and couldn't catch a breath. All of a sudden I felt faint and had to be helped to sick bay. My dad came and drove me straight to the hospital where they almost immediately diagnosed me with SVT (Supraventricular tachycardia) which means; an abnormally fast heart beat. My heartbeat that day had risen to just around 200 bpm. This condition was most likely brought on because of my other heart condition. I am lucky enough to not be on any daily medication for SVT, but I have had 2 other episodes since. It is one of the scariest moments in a person's life.

As an adult I am under the care of the Royal Melbourne Hospital. I was having yearly checks that have just been changed to two yearly. I feel like I have almost "Grown into" my heart conditions in a sense that it's not something that rules my life anymore and day to day is just like anyone else and I really know the way my body works and how to manage things. I have two children now and although I was closely monitored by the cardiologist during my pregnancy and labour, both children came into this world without any heart related complications.

I try to be as active as I can with my children and we enjoy going to places like the beach or bike riding..or just exploring new parks ect.. I work part time as a dental nurse at the Royal Melbourne Dental Hospital and I have just recently finished film school. I am so busy and so lucky that my life is a "normal" one! Well my "normal" anyway! :)



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