



# Survivor story



## Jean Hooper, 32, Hampshire



**'Be careful,' Jean Hooper told her sporty husband Brian and young daughter Tia on many occasions, concerned that their regular exercise made them more vulnerable to a sudden cardiac arrest.**

**Little could Jean have known it would be her who would suffer one, aged just 30.**

**Without any warning Jean collapsed near Southampton airport after taking her daughter to a football event. Realising something was very wrong; her friend immediately began performing CPR on her. She worked on Jean for an astonishing 29 minutes as ambulances battled through traffic in the city.**

**After being rushed to hospital and surviving several scares, Jean has since made a remarkable recovery.**

**Here she tells Arrhythmia Alliance about that day in November 2011.**

“The thought had never crossed my mind,” recalls Jean Hooper.

“I was always more worried about my daughter and my husband because they are very active. I even told them on occasion to be careful and take it easy. Who would have thought it would be me?”

Like many sudden cardiac arrest victims, Jean doesn't remember much of what happened prior to her collapse. She didn't have any warning signs and had never had problems with her heart before.

“My friend has told me what happened because the first thing I remember is waking up in hospital about two weeks later.

“We had dropped the girls off at a football event and were heading back when I just collapsed, completely without warning.

***‘Anne wasn't trained,  
but she stepped in and  
saved my life’***

“She knew something was wrong and started CPR straight away.”

As ambulances fought their way through traffic in the city centre, Jean's friend Anne administered CPR on her for nearly half an hour with the help of a stranger who Jean has never been able to track down, keeping her alive before paramedics arrived and used an AED (automated external defibrillator) to shock her heart back into normal rhythm.

“They saved my life for sure. Anne wasn't trained but she just stepped in and did her best and she kept me alive until the ambulance arrived – there's no doubt about that.”

With her friend's help and five shocks from a defibrillator once paramedics arrived at the scene, Jean survived to hospital but her life was still hanging in the balance.

She was given therapeutic hypothermia where the body is cooled to reduce any brain damage but went on to suffer another ten cardiac arrests in hospital. This was then followed by a spell of pneumonia.

But Jean beat the odds and survived; even managing to get back home for Christmas after having an ICD (implantable cardioverter-defibrillator) fitted in her chest.

***‘I know I beat very long  
odds to survive’***

Since then she has married her husband Brian and returned to work.

“When I look back I can't really believe what happened. When I woke up my first concern was what had happened on TV programmes I like! I just didn't have a clue what had happened to me.

“I know now that I beat very long odds. I wouldn’t say it has changed my outlook because I have always lived life to the full and appreciated my family and the important things in life. But I think it is certainly an experience that grounds you.”

After seeing Hearts & Goals Jean was moved to get involved and after her own life was saved by an AED (automated external defibrillator) she now wants to fundraise through the campaign for one in her community, in Hampshire.



“What happened to Fabrice did really hit home with me, especially as it happened so soon after my own experiences.

“Like me he was still young and it came completely out of the blue. It just goes to show the extent to which there can be no warning at all.

***‘It is so important all public places have defibrillators’***

“It really opened my eyes to the importance of having AEDs in communities. I beat the odds because I had to wait until the ambulance arrived to be shocked but many people are not so lucky.

“It is so important all public places have defibrillators there ready to use. I know only too well how sudden cardiac arrest can strike from nowhere so we need to get as many of them into communities as possible.

“They really do need to be as common as fire extinguishers.”

**Jean is now fundraising for Hearts & Goals and wants to raise enough to place a defibrillator in her community.**