

## Mother of toddler saved from sudden cardiac arrest with “personal EMT” – a wearable device

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Lushawnda Perkins, 38, is the mother of a 3-year-old son. When she received a diagnosis of heart failure that put her at risk for sudden cardiac death, she knew she would do anything necessary to protect herself so she could continue to be there for him.

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) claims the lives of 350,000 Americans each year, but Lushawnda survived because she was prescribed the LifeVest® wearable cardioverter defibrillator.

Lushawnda presented to the hospital with severe shortness of breath. Following an EKG, she was diagnosed with heart failure with an ejection fraction of 14%. The ejection fraction (EF) refers to how well your heart is pumping, and patients with a low EF (under 35%) are at an increased risk for SCA. Lushawnda was referred to Cardiac Solutions and Dr. Salil Sethi, who kept her protected with LifeVest during her cardiac recovery.



Unlike a heart attack, SCA happens without warning. SCA occurs when a failure of the heart’s electrical system triggers a dangerously fast heartbeat – so fast that it causes the heart to quiver or shake instead of pumping blood to the body and brain. This causes the individual to suddenly lose consciousness. The most effective treatment is an electrical shock called defibrillation. Without treatment, death can occur within minutes.

According to Lushawnda, LifeVest was described as her “personal EMT” to be with her at all times. “That made me think,” she added, “it does take time for someone to get there to help you.”

LifeVest is designed to continuously monitor a patient’s heart, detect life-threatening rapid heart rhythms, and automatically deliver a defibrillation treatment to restore normal heart rhythm and save a patient’s life. In a typical situation, the entire event, from detecting a life-threatening rapid heartbeat to automatically delivering a shock, occurs in about one minute. Lushawnda was told to wear LifeVest under her clothes day and night, only taking it off for a short shower.

After wearing LifeVest for several months, Lushawnda suffered sudden cardiac arrest in the middle of the night. While she was sleeping, LifeVest detected a life-threatening arrhythmia and delivered a treatment shock that restored her normal heart rhythm and saved her life. She awoke after the treatment. After speaking with Dr. Sethi, Lushawnda was taken to Banner Thunderbird Hospital, where she received an ICD for long-term protection.

“The LifeVest did its job,” she said. “I’m glad I wore it. I love that ‘Vest.’”

Lushawnda is undergoing cardiac rehab and is thankful to Dr. Sethi and her cardiology team, who are “motivational and positive.” They encouraged her to do something good for herself, and Lushawnda is making plans to celebrate her new lease on life.