

Don't Ignore the Rest



When my husband, Khoren — who has secondary-progressive MS — complained of excruciating pain down both arms and something that felt like a toothache, he took some ibuprofen. Just when we started to become familiar with his usual MS-related aches and pains, a new symptom seemed to be coming on to the scene. Great.

I didn't want to make a big deal of it, but I'd never seen that look of distress on his face before. When he sat up in bed, it gave him some relief, but that strategy soon stopped working. He took a muscle relaxer and another drug for nerve pain that he typically skipped. He decided to head out to the living room so one of us could sleep. I told him I'd turn our noise machine off in the bedroom so I could hear if something went wrong. As it turns out, that was the smartest fluke of a decision I'd ever made in my life.

Because the thing is... something did go wrong. He had a heart attack. I woke up to the sound of low groaning and found him slumped down in the chair. I thought he'd had an allergic reaction to the medication he had taken. He wasn't breathing. I called 911. Two harrowing days later he awoke from a medically induced coma — weak but 100 percent my husband. We were lucky.

Heart disease runs in Khoren's family, which we discovered just a tad too late. We were so focused on his MS, that we ignored the rest.

When is the last time you had a full physical and talked about your health beyond MS? There's no time like the present.