

Albert's Story

Heart Attack Survivor Albert Nutter – Waterville, Maine

If you ask Albert Nutter why he is alive today, he would probably tell you fate had a lot to do with it. The 35-year-old sports junkie was playing in a baseball tournament in Pittsfield on a sunny Saturday in June and his team was on a winning streak. As he was crossing home plate after hitting a homerun, Albert bent over to pick up his bat and crumpled to the ground.



His heart had stopped and he wasn't breathing. One of his teammates immediately started CPR while another called 9-1-1. The call went to EMTs Patrick Foley and Lisa Simko at the Sebecook Valley Ambulance Service, who arrived on the scene with a defibrillator in less than five minutes. Albert had suffered from arrhythmia, where the electrical message system of the heart stops working. If he had been alone when it happened, his heart may never have started again. But with the help of prompt CPR and the defibrillator, Al's heart was restarted and the ambulance transported him to Sebecook Valley Hospital.

Emergency physicians realized he needed the care of a cardiac center. While working to support the fragile state of Albert's heart, doctors immediately called for LifeFlight, who would take Albert to Eastern Maine Medical Center. When the flight crew arrived, they implemented a new post-cardiac arrest therapeutic hypothermia protocol. This progressive new therapy cools the body to hypothermic levels in order to inhibit damage to the patient's vital organs and reduce swelling of the brain, which normally occurs after such an event.

Albert remained in a medically induced coma for nearly four days. When he awoke, he underwent surgery in which doctors inserted an internal defibrillator to help ensure Albert's heart doesn't stop again for a very long time. Just a couple of weeks after his surgery, this father of four was back to work, showing no signs of his medical ordeal save for the scar where the defibrillator was placed. Albert's experience is another great example of Maine's strong chain of survival, where every link, from the bystander CPR to the paramedics to the physicians, was essential to his survival.