

Rich Maloy — Kaiser Permanente Colorado member story

Rich Maloy
Kaiser Permanente Colorado member

We all want to have good health and to live long and to live these beautiful, wonderful lives.

I went in for my annual physical, and my primary care doctor said, I think I hear a murmur. Do you have something wrong with your heart? Do you have a heart condition? I thought, no, I don't have a heart condition.

He said, well, let's just check it out. And so I got a referral to the cardiology department and I went and had an echocardiogram, and it turns out that I had a bicuspid aortic valve.

This is a congenital heart defect. I've had this since I was born. Nobody ever caught this before.

So we tracked it and we monitored it. And for years it wasn't a problem.

But in the summer of 2021, I had family visiting and my nieces and nephews and my kids were all playing in the backyard, we're having this great big squirt gun battle, and I nearly blacked out, and it was incredibly scary. And so we went in for another echocardiogram. And it turned out that the valve's time was up and it was time for a replacement.

Tracy Huckin, DO
Cardiologist
Kaiser Permanente Colorado

Kaiser Permanente really treats the whole spectrum of cardiovascular disease. From coronary artery disease, heart attacks, angina to different arrhythmias from atrial fibrillation to premature ventricular contractions.

Rich Maloy

From the time that I had that scare until the time I had the surgery was only two months.

I went with the mechanical valve. The mechanical valve will last forever. I feel great today.

Mark Jeong, MD
Cardiologist
Kaiser Permanente Colorado

The beauty of cardiac care at Kaiser Permanente is the integrated nature of the practice that we have access to, not just the primary care doctors, but all the subspecialists that we work closely with. And it's that integration that makes timely expeditious care possible.

You can think of this as multiple layers of doctors looking after you, starting from primary care doctors who are going to talk to patients about all the guideline driven guidance to all the other ancillary services, such as our pharmacists who can make sure that all the labs are performed at the right time. Then to specialists where we can make sure that patients with real cardiac conditions are following the right tempo of surveillance and screenings to make sure that their health is on track.

Rich Maloy

It's a very special thing when you can have that sort of relationship where you have that level of trust with your primary care doctor, starting with the initial discovery of the heart valve defect, I felt like that it was a very seamless transition.

I think this is a unique aspect of Kaiser Permanente with this integrated model because the doctors are focused on the patient.

Being able to just sit down and have a conversation with a doctor for an hour to go through everything could be happening is incredibly important. And in this case was lifesaving.