

## Vickie Barbee – Family History of Heart Disease

Vickie Barbee always knew her family history put her at risk for heart disease. Her grandfather died at 53 of a massive heart attack. Her aunt passed away at 43 from one. Her uncle had his at 35, and her cousin was on the list for a heart transplant and died waiting for one at 37. But her mother's story is what startled Vickie enough to consider her own future.

"My mom had always exercised and her weight was never an issue," she explains. "She went in for a routine stress test at the doctor and the next day, she was having a triple bypass."

Vickie remembers the unforgettable words her aunt told her as they waited in the hospital for her mother during surgery.

"She said 'See what you have to look forward to?'" recalls Vickie.

That was all the fuel she needed to make the choice to change her own health. She had always been an independent thinker and never settled. She wasn't about to die young without a fight.

Since she never had a weight problem, dieting didn't cross her mind. Starting with a food journal, Vickie recorded her fat, protein and fiber intake. She paid special attention to limiting her saturated fats and left no nutritional label unturned. She decided to give her heart a workout, too.

"Making good choices was not as difficult as I thought it would be," she tells.

From cheeseburgers and milk chocolate to steamed broccoli and daily walks, Vickie transformed herself.

When you ask Vickie about her cholesterol and blood pressure, she rattles off the numbers like her it's her address or cell phone. She's impressed and even challenged her doctors with her own knowledge.

Vickie refuses to be another sad story in her family's heart health history.

"I don't want to be part of the heart disease tradition in my family, so I've made the choices to change my health and my life," she explains. "I like to break a sweat every day in some way whether it's doing workout videos and Pilates to cleaning the house with ankle weights on. Anything to get my heart rate up!"

Next on Vickie's activity list is to get serious about golf though she loves to dance and wants to bicycle and play tennis more, too. There's never a dull moment in her life, but there is a driving force.

"I Go Red for my mom," says Vickie. "To show her all the things that are possible."