PATTAYA EXPATS CLUB | KEYNOTE

The Lucky Escape

My wake-up call: a cardiac survival story and what every expat over 60 should do about it.

Daniel Schwartz | Pattaya, Thailand | 10 November 2026

ACT I: THE ILLUSION OF INVINCIBILITY

Feeling fine is not the same as being fine

The business trap

Deadlines and meetings win over sleep, rest and warning signs.

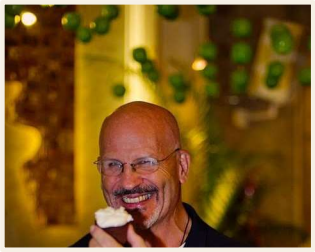
The hustle trap

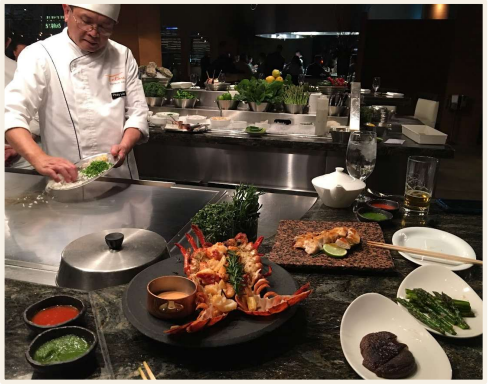
Constantly proving ourselves while ignoring fatigue and subtle discomfort.

Deferred health

"I'll get a full checkup next month, when work slows down."

Living the Good Life - Root Cause





JULY 2026

Two days before my 66th birthday

The plan

Birthday dinner. Business ventures. Driving around Thailand without a care in the world.

The reality

145pm: Sudden, ache in my chest, jaw and left elbow pain. Emergency transport to Bangbuatong Hospital ER. Then an hour later to Krung Siam St. Carlos Hospital. Straight to the Cath Lab.
600pm: On the table!






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MEDICAL REALITY

Heart attacks rarely look like the movies

No dramatic warning

No collapsing days in advance. Symptoms can be quiet or easy to explain away.

Silent blockages

Arteries can be up to 90% blocked while you still walk, work and feel energetic.

ACT II

Inside the Cath Lab

The critical two-hour and thirty-minute fight at Krung Siam St. Carlos.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT HAPPENED

Diagnosis: NSTEMI

What it is

Non-ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction. A severe artery restriction chokes the heart muscle's oxygen supply.

The urgent risk

Without fast intervention: complete artery shutdown, heart muscle death, or a fatal arrhythmia.

CATH LAB

The procedure, and the moment it went wrong

1

First stent

2.25 x 28 mm drug-eluting stent placed in the mid LCx after balloon pre-dilatation.

2

Complication

Instant clot (stent thrombosis) and an artery-edge tear. Chest pain returned on the table.

3

The response

Second stent over the tear, clot aspiration catheter, and an intensive IV anti-clotting drip.

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

69%

Normal LVEF on my July 8 echocardiogram

TIMI 3 flow restored.

No wall-motion abnormalities.

Zero permanent heart muscle damage.

ACT III

Recovery and the daily protocol

Discipline, injections, and the pills that keep my stents open.

TIMELINE

From CCU to home in 24 hours

July 8, 2026

Emergency admission, cath lab PCI procedure, CCU monitoring.

July 9, 2026

Discharged pain-free on a strict regimen: 7 days of blood-thinner injections, then daily antiplatelet pills, aspirin for life.

My personal experience, not medical advice. Drugs and doses are for your cardiologist to decide.

ACT IV

Lessons for Pattaya expats

Health preparedness for living in Thailand past 60.

EXPAT HEALTH RULES

Three rules I wish I had followed earlier

1. Scan, don't just stress-test

A treadmill stress test can look normal even when plaque is building. Ask your doctor about a CT coronary angiogram.

2. Know your Cath Lab

Confirm 24/7 cardiac catheterisation capability. Keep records and insurance details at hand.

3. De-escalate work

Chronic stress accelerates heart disease. No contract is worth an ICU admission.

ONGOING MONITORING

The follow-up that matters

November 11 review

Check stent healing and blood parameters at my local heart centre.

Relook angiogram

Reassess the minor blockages in LAD (40-50%) and RCA to keep them controlled.

ACT V

Starting my second life

"That heart attack didn't end my life. It started my second one."







Why it matters: this is who I almost didn't get to come home to.

NEW VISION

My chapter two priorities

Uncompromising health

Zero missed medications, active living, regular checkups.

Present moments

Savouring all I do and expat life in Thailand with gratitude.

Community purpose

Sharing this wake-up call to help fellow expats save their lives.

"Your business can wait. Your body won't."

Thank you. Questions and shared experiences welcome.

Daniel Schwartz | Pattaya Expats Club | 10 November 2026

Q&A BACKUP: PATTAYA HOSPITALS

If it happens in Pattaya: where do you go?

Bangkok Hospital Pattaya

24-hour emergency centre, a 24-hour cath lab, a chest-pain fast track, and a mobile coronary care unit.

Call before you need to

Emergency centre: +66 3825 9986. Save it in your phone and tell your family.

Check any other hospital

Ask one question: "Do you have a cath lab and an interventional cardiologist available 24/7?"

Source: Bangkok Hospital Pattaya website. Confirm details directly with the hospital.

Q&A BACKUP: MY CASE

Cost, insurance and where I was treated

Where I was treated

I live in Bang Bua Thong, 30 minutes from Krung Siam St. Carlos. I had my hip replaced there in December 2013, so I knew the hospital.

What it cost me

Shared live in the Q&A.

Insurance

Policy limits, pre-authorisation, and how fast the hospital took me in.

Q&A BACKUP: CT SCANS

CT coronary angiogram: what to ask your doctor

What it is

A CT scan with iodine contrast injected into a vein. It images the heart arteries directly, with no catheter.

Where it falls short

Less reliable with heavy calcium or a fast, irregular heartbeat. Involves radiation, and the contrast needs healthy kidneys.

What it costs

Calcium-score-only CT: about 2,500-5,200 baht in 2026 promo packages. The full contrast scan price is not published: ask.

A calcium score is a cheaper, separate test. Cath angiogram package at Bangkok Heart Hospital: from about 62,100 baht. Sources: Bangkok Hospital, RadiologyInfo.org. Prices vary.

Q&A BACKUP: WHERE TO GO

Six cath-lab options near Pattaya

Listed for angiograms and angioplasty; Pattaya Memorial and Banglamung refer advanced procedures elsewhere.



Bangkok Hospital Pattaya

PATTAYA • PRIVATE

24/7 cath lab for angiograms, angioplasty and stents; full Heart Center and CCU.



Phyathai Sriracha Hospital

SI RACHA • PRIVATE

24-hour Heart Center and CCU; biplane/3D cath-lab imaging for PCI and stenting.



Samitivej Chonburi Hospital

CHON BURI • PRIVATE

Dedicated cardiovascular center and cath lab for planned or emergency angioplasty.



Chonburi Hospital

CHON BURI • GOVERNMENT

Provincial tertiary referral center with an active cardiology unit and cath lab.



Bangkok Hospital Rayong

RAYONG • PRIVATE

24/7 angiography, balloon angioplasty, stenting and clot aspiration.



Queen Sirikit Naval Hospital

SATTAHIP • MILITARY / PUBLIC

Regional Cardiac Center and cath lab for acute interventions near U-Tapao.

Confirm current cath-lab hours and emergency intake before travel. Summary based on the hospitals listed in the source material.

Q&A BACKUP: ELECTIVE COSTS

Elective CAG and PCI packages: ฿62k–฿322k

Published Bangkok Heart Hospital prices for 2026; emergency care and extra devices can raise the total.

PACKAGE	STAY	PUBLISHED PRICE
CAG • transradial day case	—	฿62,100
CAG • transfemoral	1 night	฿66,700
CAG • transradial	1 night	฿69,000
CAG + PCI • transfemoral	2 nights	฿299,000
CAG + PCI • transradial	2 nights	฿322,000

ADDITIONAL STENT

฿100k–130k

estimated for each extra drug-eluting stent

WATCH THE EXCLUSIONS

Pre-assessment, specialist consults, extra tests, underlying-condition costs and non-specified devices may be separate.

Emergency admission can exceed elective package pricing.

Source: Bangkok Heart Hospital 2026 CAG/PCI packages; original material refs. [1–3]. Confirm current terms directly.

Q&A BACKUP: LOCAL PRICE CHECK

Hospital-specific pricing is mostly quote-only

For all six local options, request a written CAG and PCI quote; the figures below are network benchmarks only.

HOSPITAL	AREA / TYPE	CAG PRICE	PCI PRICE	PUBLIC PRICING STATUS
Bangkok Hospital Pattaya	Pattaya • private	**฿62.1–69k***	**฿299–322k***	Bangkok Heart network benchmark; branch quote required
Phyathai Sriracha	Si Racha • private	Not posted	Not posted	Phyathai lists CAG at another branch; ask Sriracha directly
Samitivej Chonburi	Chon Buri • private	Not posted	Not posted	No CAG/PCI package found in public promotions
Chonburi Hospital	Chon Buri • gov't	Not posted	Not posted	Public self-pay tariff not found; eligibility affects cost
Bangkok Hospital Rayong	Rayong • private	**฿62.1–69k***	**฿299–322k***	Bangkok Heart network benchmark; branch quote required
Queen Sirikit Naval Hospital	Sattahip • public	Not posted	Not posted	Ask admissions; entitlement and case complexity affect cost

** Planning reference only: Bangkok Heart Hospital 2026 CAG/PCI schedule, not a Pattaya or Rayong branch quote. Confirm inclusions, devices and emergency surcharges in writing.*