



“ Bupa arranged for my original flight ticket to be **upgraded to business class** ”

*We often receive emails and letters from customers who want to show their appreciation for the service we have delivered in connection with a disease or an accident.*

*Sometimes their case can help to show how we work and the benefits of international insurance cover. We then ask permission to publish their story.*

*We have received such permission from Leif Egeholm Nielsen. He works for an international IT company and is insured with Bupa through his job. His insurance proved of great use to him during a stay in Austin, Texas, where he suffered a heart attack.*

Customer story:

## Leif Egeholm Nielsen

### Attending a workshop in Texas

In July last year, I went to Austin, Texas to attend a work-related five-week workshop. I was put up in an apartment located approximately one kilometre from the office, so that I could walk to and from the workshop.

One morning I felt slightly unwell during my walk to the workshop, but I told myself it was because the temperature was 35°C with a humidity of 80-85percent. As soon as I was back indoors, I felt well again. In the afternoon when I walked home and the humidity was lower, there was no problem.

After 14 days in Austin, I started jogging in the evening together with some colleagues. Even though it had only been a couple of months since the last time I went running, I was in such a bad way that I could only run for one kilometre before I had to stop and take a break. I felt as if my larynx was constricted, so I could not breathe. My left arm was also aching. I could not remember ever having experienced that before.

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### One jogging trip too many

I defied the physical discomfort and continued jogging. But one night I felt worse than the other times, so I chose to run to an indoor fitness centre where it was cooler. Unfortunately, I never got that far - 50 metres before the entrance, I passed out. When I regained consciousness after a couple of minutes, my colleague had already stopped a car to call an ambulance.

When the ambulance arrived, the paramedics quickly established that my blood pressure was too high and that my heart was not beating regularly. It was obvious that I needed to be taken to the emergency room, so I told them that I had insurance.

My colleague got my insurance card containing both policy number and contact details, and shortly after met me at the hospital. After approximately an hour I was informed that contact to Bupa had been established and that all expenses would be covered. Of course, that information gave me one less thing to worry about.

Five hours later, I was transferred from the emergency room to a room in the cardiology department. The plan was to examine me the following day and then depending on the test results, undergo a balloon angioplasty.

### In contact with Bupa doctors

The next morning I was phoned by a doctor from Bupa who confirmed that they would be on the sideline during my hospitalisation. This was the first time I spoke to a Danish doctor and that alone was reassuring, even though the US doctors and nurses all were incredibly professional and competent and took their time to explain things one more time, until I understood exactly what they said.

I was operated on at noon, and when I regained consciousness an hour later, the doctors explained to me that my lower coronary artery was 80 percent blocked. I had undergone a balloon angioplasty with stent placement to keep the artery open. Everything should now be in order and I already felt considerably better.

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Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, I was once again in contact with the doctor from Bupa who helped put my mind at rest and advise me what I ought to do. In the meantime, my wife had also been in touch with Bupa who had arranged for her to travel to the US to see me. Late Wednesday afternoon I was discharged from the hospital.

On Friday my wife arrived. Good for me, but maybe even more important for her. She had been much more worried about me than I had about myself, so that help from Bupa really meant a lot to us.

### Travelling home on business class

Due to the surgery, I was not allowed to fly home for another week. Bupa arranged for my original flight ticket to be upgraded to business class, which meant I got a better seat with more legroom. It was also important to me that I got more choice in the food including more fruit and vegetables.

Now, two months after all this happened, I feel significantly better. I have changed my food and my exercise habits radically and little by little I have started to work again.

### Good advice

There is a lot of good advice to pass on from this story:

- 1) Exercise is a good thing. It is true that I collapsed during a run. However, had I not provoked that collapse, it would have happened at a later stage, and the consequences could have been fatal. Now, the only thing I have to do is take medicine, ie beta blockers to prevent me from getting a high pulse. I am already now able to ride a bike for 45 minutes, and I will probably be able to start running again soon.
- 2) Be aware of your body's warning signals. High blood pressure, weight on the chest and pain in the arm under strained conditions are all typical symptoms of something being wrong. I ignored all those symptoms on the pretext that these might be caused by the heat and humidity. If I had not exercised and thereby provoked the collapse, I would probably have been able to carry on as usual for a couple of weeks, but sooner or later it would have happened.
- 3) I had insurance and I had brought the documentation with me. That made things much easier and the help we got from Bupa significantly eased our minds during a difficult time.

