

My name is **Marcus Gunton** and I am a proud CHD survivor. I was born on 29/03/2000 with a congenital heart defect. Here is my story:

- The day after I was born, the paediatrician discovered that I had a heart murmur. I was x-rayed to establish if I had all four heart chambers. Fortunately I did and was then referred to a paediatric cardiologist, Dr Joan Hunter at Louis Leipoldt for a sonar scan and further testing.
- During the scan, the doctor discovered that I had three holes in my heart. One was a VSD, one was an ASD and the other was a PDA.
 - An ASD is an Atrial Septal Defect (ASD) is a hole in the atrial septum, or muscle wall, that separates the right and left atria or upper chambers of the heart. My ASD was small and was sutured closed during surgery.
 - A Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD) is a hole in the ventricular septum - the muscular wall that separates the right and left ventricles, or main pumping chambers of the heart allowing the movement of blood between the ventricles. My VSD was large and had to be patched with artificial material.
 - Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) is a congenital heart condition in which the ductus, or pathway between the pulmonary and aortic valves, remains open or patent. In most cases, the ductus closes within a day after birth. However, in patent ductus arteriosus, it remains open, causing blood to mix between the two valves. My PDA was corrected with a suture.
 - At the age of 5 months I developed congestive heart failure and was put on medication to assist my heart and lungs. This was a very difficult and stressful time for my parents and brother because I slept very little and cried most of the time.
 - I was treated with diuretics called Lasix to reduce the volume of fluid in my lungs making it easier for me to breathe and eat. I was also on Digoxin to increase the contraction of my heart muscle to help it to function more effectively.
 - I was referred to the famous cardio thoracic surgeon, Dr Susan Vosloo, for life saving surgery. My surgery took place on the 5 of October 2000 at the Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital in Cape Town. It was a 4 and a half hour operation. It was open heart surgery and my blood was circulated by a bypass machine while the medical team repaired my heart. I spent 4 days in ICU where I was sedated and on a ventilator. This gave my body time rest and recover. I went to the childrens ward for 3 days and went home on the 7th day.
 - With the help of two of the best specialists, my cardiologist, Dr Joan Hunter and surgeon, Dr Susan Vosloo my heart was completely fixed without any unforeseen complications. Thankfully I had expert care and did not have any problems or setbacks and subsequently recovered very quickly.
 - I am so grateful that my CHD was diagnosed early and repaired as a baby. While it was a very difficult time for my family, I don't remember any of it. I am now able to live a normal, active life.
 - My wish is to be an inspiration to other CHD warriors and their parents. My message to you is "never be ashamed of a scar, it simply means you were stronger than whatever tried to hurt you".

Pictures of me in ICU after my surgery



This is how far I have come

