

SNAPSHOTS

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Sun Xiaoming, 35, had never been aboard an aircraft until being loaded into a medical helicopter on March 26.

The air ambulance transported Sun, who had been in a coma for five days, to the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, and the aircraft was so loud that patients and their relatives ventured outside to watch it land.

If Sun had been transported to Beijing from his home in Raoyang county of Hengshui, in the northern Hebei province, via an ambulance instead of a helicopter, it would have taken at least three hours to travel the distance of more than 250 kilometers. However, with the medical helicopter, the trip took only around 40 minutes.

Last winter, Sun started to have difficulty breathing but did not think twice about it. However, his symptoms worsened and, in the week before flying to Beijing for medical treatment, he was treated at a local hospital. But Sun had a high fever and fell into a coma.

"I am usually busy at work and often stay up late. And I also like drinking and smoking," Sun said. "Maybe the unhealthy eating and living habits made me fatter and fatter."

At the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, Sun underwent two major operations, including a heart valve replacement. He spent more than 80 days at the hospital and lost about 60 kilograms — down from 230 kg.

"Since we had to perform his surgery while preventing Sun from severe infection and high fever, the time saved by the helicopter-based medical evacuation mattered a lot," said Liu Peng, the hospital's vice-president.

With the upcoming 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, air rescue has emerged as part of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei coordinated development plan.

On June 15, Sun recovered and was discharged from the hospital. He was the first patient in Hengshui to use the helicopter ambulance service. "Thanks to everyone, including my wife and doctors. It's you who gave me a second chance at life," he said.

Qiu Yuqing contributed to this story.



Sun Xiaoming, who was in a coma for five days, is transferred to receive emergency treatment at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Beijing on March 26.
 PHOTOS BY ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

AIR AMBULANCE SAVES TIME AND LIVES



Sun (left) and his wife Wang Juan (center) talk with Wang Chen, president of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, on June 14.



Doctor Lin Fan disinfects Sun before operating on May 22.



Liu Peng, vice-president of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, performs an operation on May 22.



Sun checks his chest X-ray at the hospital on June 3.



The medical helicopter carrying Sun prepares to land at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital on March 26.