



FAMILY HEART: Wally Katzke, second from left, photographed during the week with his daughter Yvette, son Rigardt and wife Sarie.

PHOTO: HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION

Wally's 'heart-hitting' story

Waldemar Wally Katzke has become the first South African to undergo open-heart surgery broadcast live on television and beamed to many parts of the world.

The 52-year-old Johannesburg businessman volunteered, after careful consultation with a team of medical experts, to become the first heart patient to tell his cardiovascular disease story on the popular SABC 3*Talk* show hosted by Noeleen Maholwana-Sangqu.

That culminated in a special two hour live broadcast on Saturday from 8pm to 10pm on SABC3.

Katzke has survived the surgery but will be monitored closely for the next 48 hours, said Michelle Kearney, communications director of the Heart and Stroke

Foundation of South Africa.

"We, with two million viewers around South Africa, are thrilled at the successful outcome of the surgery," Kearney said.

"We hope that this heart-hitting message has reached all South Africans and made them rethink their lifestyle and diet choices."

Doctors who performed the single bypass open-heart surgery said while for them it was a routine procedure, they were proud of Katzke's unselfish commitment to share it with others.

They hoped the broadcast had educated viewers on the very real risk of cardiovascular disease as a result of poor diet and lifestyle.

A heavy smoker who led a sedentary life, Katzke had suf-

fered a mild heart attack in 1999.

But his continued poor lifestyle – which included skipping breakfast and lunch, consuming too much red meat and too little fruit and vegetables, doing virtually no physical exercise, smoking heavily and succumbing to work stress – meant that a continued build-up of fatty deposits in his coronary arteries made him a prime candidate for a more serious second attack. Doctors had to act quickly.

But all that is behind him now. He has a second chance at life because of the successful surgery performed by well-respected Gauteng cardiothoracic surgeon Martin Sussman and his team in Milpark Hospital's Theatre 7. – *Sowetan Reporter*