

- Go for Vegetables, not Vegetarianism...page 4
- New Hope for Smokers...page 5
- Walking: It's in Your Genes!...page 6
- Get to Know Your Cardiologists...page 8

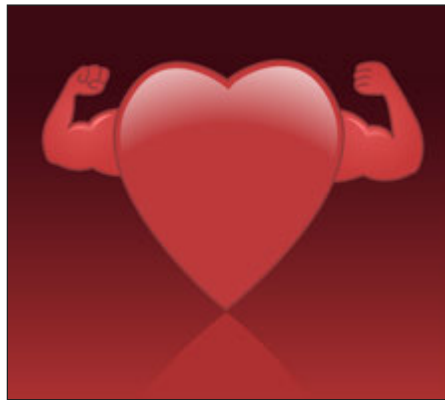
Have **COURAGE!** Heart Attacks and Cardiac Death Can be Eliminated

By James H. O'Keefe, M.D.

We used to believe that heart disease was just a plumbing problem, where the gradual build-up of plaque in the coronary arteries eventually chokes off the blood supply to the heart muscle, much the same way that sludge accumulation gradually clogs up the pipes from your kitchen sink. The intuitively obvious solution to both of these problems is to simply unclog the pipes. Indeed, balloon angioplasty and stents unclog the blockages, and bypass surgery re-routes the blood around the blockages, restoring normal blood flow to the heart muscle and fixing the problem—or so we thought.

Unfortunately, fixing your coronary arteries is not as simple as unclogging the pipes to your sink. It turns out that most heart attacks are caused by smaller plaques that are much like pimples on your skin. These plaques can become filled with pus and cholesterol, causing them to become inflamed and prone to tear or rupture.

Rarely, this can stimulate a clot to form, suddenly transforming the previously innocent looking plaque into a life-threatening complete coronary occlusion. While it is still important to seek out and eliminate the tight blockages, it is equally important to get the pus, cholesterol,



and inflammation out of those hidden pimples just under the inner lining of the heart's arteries. The right diet, exercise, and medications can quickly heal the complexion of vessel walls, and restore your arteries to their naturally smooth, soft, and supple state, which markedly reduces your risk of heart attack and cardiac death.

Here at Cardiovascular Consultants, we were part of the COURAGE study, a large trial of 2,287 patients from the U.S. and Canada with stable angina (chest discomfort caused by significant blockages in the coronary arteries). The patients were randomly assigned to receive either a stent procedure and aggressive medical therapy, or aggressive control of their risk factors with medications, diet and lifestyle alone.

At the end of the five-year study, almost the same number of patients in both groups had died,

suffered a heart attack, stroke or continued to have chest pain. This study suggests that many people with stable coronary artery disease can be safely managed without resorting immediately to invasive therapies like stents or coronary bypass surgery.

However, about 30 percent of the patients who were originally assigned to medical therapy ended up needing a stent during the five-year study.

The COURAGE study affirms our approach at Cardiovascular Consultants to patients with stable coronary disease. We place a strong emphasis on aggressive medical therapy for risk factors using safe, effective, and life-saving medications like statins (for cholesterol), ACE inhibitors, ARBs, beta blockers (for blood pressure), aspirin, and fish oil. We also emphasize the importance of diet, daily exercise and regular check-ups to make sure your numbers are in the ideal ranges that will keep your arteries unclogged.

Ideally, we like to check your heart periodically to ensure that your arteries stay open. As in the COURAGE trial, if problems come up, we may need to consider doing an angioplasty to eliminate tight blockages. By combining aggressive

continued on page 2

Have COURAGE! *continued from page 1*

medical therapy with focused interventions when needed, we can make sure that you and your heart continue to thrive.

Importantly, if you develop unstable symptoms, like suddenly worsening or unrelenting chest discomfort, that go along with an acutely blocked coronary artery, you need to seek immediate medical attention. Urgent cardiac catheterization and stenting for an evolving or threatened heart attack is a dramatic life-saving therapy that was invented right here at the Mid America Heart Institute of Saint Luke's Hospital in Kansas City. In 1980, Drs. Geoffrey Hartzler and Barry Rutherford, working for Cardiovascular Consultants, used a balloon catheter to open a coronary artery of a man who happened to have a heart attack while he was in the hospital. That man remains alive and well today, and since then we have been using urgent balloon and stent therapy to treat heart attacks. That treatment has evolved to become the gold standard for treating heart attack patients around the modern world.

Do I Have to Take These Medicines for the Rest of My Life?

To this, one of the most common questions I hear from my patients, I often reply, "No, only until about a year before you die. At that point you won't need them anymore. When you get that date on your calendar, let us know and we can simplify your medication regimen."

But seriously, who knows what we'll be using to treat your

cardiac risk factors in five, 10, or 20 years? For now, this is the best we've got, and it will keep you alive and well, especially if you also do your best to eat right, exercise daily and don't smoke.

Scientists estimate that it took humans about 100,000 years to develop spoken language. Another 25,000 years went by before we invented written language. The printing press came along 4,500 hundred years later; and then the pace of progress really started to pick up. The computer was developed 350 years later, and then the Internet (maybe the most profound human invention thus far) sprouted into existence just 20 years ago. The pace of technological progress has been accelerating with exponential speed, especially now that information moves around the globe instantaneously and continuously. By some estimates, the world's total scientific knowledge has doubled just since 1997. Things change so

quickly, especially in a dynamic field like cardiology.

Robert, who had a stent placed in one of his coronary arteries three years ago, learned first-hand how quickly things can change. When I saw him last year his blood pressure was 134/84, and his LDL (bad) cholesterol was 90. I told him, "Your numbers are great, so stick with the same medications and keep working on your diet and exercise." This year's numbers were even better with a blood pressure of 132/83 and an LDL of 85, yet I had to tell him that his numbers were not good enough—he was understandably a bit confused and irritated.

I told him, "With what we know today, it looks as though you will need to get your blood pressure to less than 130/80; your bad cholesterol to less than 70; and your blood sugar to less 100 if you want to avoid heart attacks, strokes and death from cardiovascular disease."

"I actually love being a senior; it's the graduation that worries me." Ann, age 88

Remembering the Wit and Wisdom of Will Rogers

Will Rogers died in 1935 when a daring one-eyed Oklahoma pilot named Wiley Post crashed their small airplane in Alaska. Here are a few notable quotes about getting older from this legendary cowboy-actor-humorist-author:

- ♥ Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.
- ♥ If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.
- ♥ Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
- ♥ Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.
- ♥ When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.
- ♥ I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.
- ♥ Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved. ♥

Omega-3 with a Statin: The One-Two Punch to Knock Out Coronary Disease

Omega-3 in the form of purified fish oil capsules, when combined with a statin, is a safe and effective way to further improve your cholesterol profile and also reduce the risk of heart attack and cardiac death beyond the benefits provided by statin therapy alone. This was the conclusion of the landmark JELIS study published in *Lancet* (March, 2007) of 18,600 patients with high cholesterol who were treated either with a statin, (like Lipitor, simvastatin, or Crestor), versus a statin with 1.8 grams of highly purified fish oil. The combo statin-fish oil therapy reduced risk of serious cardiovascular events, including heart attack, stroke, and cardiac death, by an additional 19 percent over the statin alone. Since we know from other studies that statins reduce cardiac events by about 30 percent, adding higher dose purified fish oil to a statin should reduce the cardiac risk by almost 50 percent. This is a very safe and well tolerated combination that powerfully lowers the bad lipids (LDL and triglycerides) and raises the good cholesterol (HDL).

CardioTabs Omega-3 is a very highly purified fish oil so it comes in smaller capsules that are enteric coated. This means they are both easy to swallow and unlikely to cause the fishy aftertaste common with other fish oils. And because they are so highly purified, you don't have to worry about any dangerous contaminants like mercury or pesticides that are found in some omega-3 sources. To receive the high doses of omega-3 used in the JELIS trial, you would need to take about two or three capsules twice daily (about four to six capsules a day). ❤️



Having, Making and Spending...Time

By James H. O'Keefe, M.D.

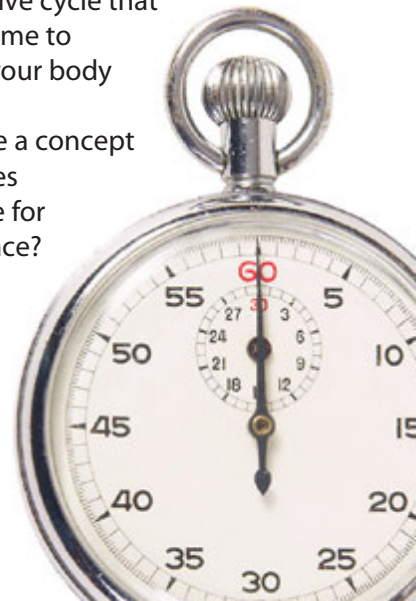
I believe that time is the most valuable commodity in our lives. Time, not money, is the true currency of life. Each of us gets only so many hours and days; and I try to remind myself and my children that time is precious and not to be wasted. I suspect none of us will be on our death beds expressing regrets like: "If only I had watched more TV." Being alive is about making a positive difference in your circle of life, whether it's helping or socializing with your family and friends, being active and learning new things, meeting new people, or exploring new places.

But, it is hard to be fully engaged in life when you aren't feeling your best. This is why taking care of yourself is so critically important. If you overeat the wrong kinds of foods, you will pay for the next several hours as your system bogs down under an immediate flood of stress chemicals and hormones, impairing the performance of your brain and body, which can ruin the rest of your day. Additionally, a sedentary lifestyle is a downward spiral—the less you do, the less you feel like doing, and before long, the less you are capable of doing. Similarly, when you are sleep deprived, life often seems to be less enjoyable and productive.

Fortunately, you can bring this vicious cycle to a screeching halt and turn it into a positive cycle that builds health and vigor. You will never be younger than you are right now, so you have no time to waste. Tomorrow is the gift of a new day. Make it a point to eat right, during the day move your body more, and get 6.5 to 8 hours of sleep.

The inhabitants of Okinawa, the world's healthiest and longest-lived people, emphasize a concept they call "Ikigai," which translates to "sense of purpose." They believe a strong Ikigai promotes longevity. When you awaken in the morning, reflect for a moment on your sense of purpose for your day ahead. What can you do today, be it small or large, to make your world a better place? I recently saw a coach wearing a T-shirt that read, "The beatings will continue until morale improves." A good attitude makes all the difference. Thoughts of gratitude or optimism, and acts of nurturing or caring will shift the balance of your brain-heart connection away from stress, and towards relaxation and healing.

I have learned that when I eat, exercise and rest the way my ancient ancestors did, and remind myself to be helpful and grateful, I can be happy and relaxed, yet focused and energized. To me, it's the best way to spend the time of my life. ❤️



Go for Vegetables, Not Vegetarianism

By James H. O'Keefe, M.D.

Crown Shakur, born in Atlanta, Ga., died from malnutrition before his first birthday. His well-meaning vegan parents, who fed their newborn son mainly soy milk and apple juice, strictly avoided all food from animal sources. They were convicted of involuntary manslaughter for their child's death. Three such convictions of vegan parents have recently been handed down in American courts, highlighting the inescapable biological fact that humans are omnivores, and as such we need both plant and animal foods to survive.

America today is a land that indulges our freedom of choice. You can choose to have green hair and blue eyes, or to watch *Sponge Bob Square Pants* around the clock, or for your morning coffee you can choose to have a vanilla, half-caf, 1 percent, extra-hot, no-foam latte—but you can't yet choose your genes. Those genes, the blueprint your cells use to build and maintain you, specify the kinds of foods upon which you will either thrive or decay. That's why not all diets are created equal, and why food cannot be like fashion fads that come and go.

Many vital nutrients, such as essential amino acids, DHA (an

omega-3 fat), vitamins B₁₂, A and D, and calcium and zinc, are found predominantly in meat, fish, eggs, dairy, and other animal by-products. So paradoxically, while fresh produce (vegetables and fruits) is the single most important component of a healthy diet, strict vegetarianism does not foster optimum human health. The traditional vegetarian diets, as in India, always included eggs, dairy, and/or fish, which provided these nutrients.

Unfortunately, most animal-based foods in our modern diet are over-processed and unhealthy due to unnaturally high levels of saturated fats, sodium, nitrites, preservatives, and other additives; giving meat a bad reputation in many nutritional circles. Yet if you want a strong body, a sharp mind, and a powerful and vigilant immune system, you should try to consume lean, healthy, fresh protein three times a day.

Be Picky about Your Protein

Lean protein also cranks up your metabolism and keeps you full longer after a meal. However, you must be very particular about your protein. The two highest quality protein sources are egg whites and whey protein. Nature designed both of these foods so they contain the precise amino acid building blocks needed to nurture young and developing animals and help them grow strong new tissues. To get one of the three protein servings for a day, I use a scoop of CardioWhey Vanilla mixed in skim milk at breakfast or as a mid-afternoon snack. Fish, seafood, chicken or turkey breast meat, and non-fat dairy foods,



are other great sources of animal protein. Even red meat is fine if it's lean (92 to 100 percent fat free), fresh, and is not burned or over-processed. Also, consider nuts or legumes, like soybeans, lentils or red beans, for one of your protein sources each day.

Portion size is important also; an ideal protein serving size is about the size of the palm of your hand, with a width about as wide as your little finger at the middle joint. Fatty meats like full-fat hamburger and prime rib are off limits, as are over-processed meats like bacon and sausage. Jerky and deli meats, although often low in fat, are too high in salt and preservatives to eat on a daily basis.

Ideally, for each meal, you should be eating about three servings of colorful, fresh or fresh frozen vegetables and fruits to go along with your serving of healthy protein. Remember to start downing those fruits and veggies at breakfast, or you'll have a tough time hitting your daily target of nine. Beverages should predominantly consist of non-caloric options like water, tea and coffee, or low-calorie, high-nutrient choices, such as low sodium V-8 juice, skim milk or soy milk.

As important as what you choose to eat and drink is what you choose to avoid consuming. Pass up processed foods, especially those containing sugar, white flour, trans fats or high fructose corn syrup. Avoid products with long lists of ingredients and those bearing health claims like low fat or low carb—they are usually full of other bad stuff! ❤️



Revolutionary Drug Gives Smokers New Hope

"If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning." Catherine Aird

By James H. O'Keefe, M.D.

Ben is the kind of guy who doesn't complain much, and so when he awoke one morning in a cold sweat with a pressure-like burning chest discomfort he just toughed it out. Unfortunately it wasn't indigestion that he was ignoring but instead a large heart attack; and by the time he finally sought medical attention 24 hours later, his heart was badly damaged. Ben was lucky to survive that event, and now four years later at 49 years of age he is faithful about taking his medications, eating right, and making time for a daily walk. He also has a state-of-the-art pacemaker called a bi-ventricular ICD that monitors his heart's every beat, and automatically corrects any dangerous rhythms. This life-saving device also simultaneously paces both sides of his heart, re-coordinating the muscular contractions and strengthening the cardiac pump's function.

Things were looking up for Ben except for one dark cloud looming on the horizon—he was still smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. He had tried everything: going cold turkey, nicotine gum and patches, Zyban, and even hypnosis. Still, he could not seem to overcome tobacco's death grip that was threatening to choke the life out of him. Then about six months ago I prescribed a revolutionary new drug for Ben called Chantix (varenicline). It works by blocking the nicotine receptors in the brain. As long as this drug is in the blood-



stream, it prevents the cravings and irritability that make the tobacco habit one of the most difficult of all addictions to conquer. About one week after starting Chantix,

Ben noticed that the cigarettes ceased to be a source of pleasure; in fact they even stopped tasting good to him. Gradually, he lost interest in smoking, and Ben finally ditched the nasty cigarettes once and for all after about six weeks of Chantix.

Scientific studies show that Chantix is at least twice as effective as any prior smoking cessation therapy. In my experience, about three out of every four smokers who give it a fair try are able to successfully quit smoking. The main side effect is an upset stomach that tends to ease off after the first week. A day's worth of Chantix

(two pills) costs about as much as a pack of cigarettes—which from my vantage point seems like a very smart trade off. Chantix should be continued for at least three months, and probably six to be sure that the smoker doesn't relapse.

Even with all of our modern weapons against disease, it is very difficult to keep someone healthy if they continue to smoke. Regardless of your age, smoking doubles your chance of dying over the next year compared to a non-smoker of similar age. Permanently kicking the smoking habit has the power to improve your long-term health and longevity like nothing else you or your doctor can do for you. This is why Chantix is such a revolutionary drug; it will give you, or a smoker you care about, the power to triumph over tobacco forever, so that like Ben, you can look forward to a blue-sky future. ❤️

Think Fast Forever

Recent studies show the more vegetables you eat on a daily basis, the less likely you are to suffer age-related declines in mental function. Specifically, green leafy veggies like spinach, broccoli and mixed greens are especially beneficial brain food.

In this study of 3,000 seniors (age 65 or older), those who ate more than two servings daily had a 40 percent rate of slower decline in brain function. The same researchers from Rush University also found that seniors prone to chronic negative emotions, like anger, anxiety and depression, were more likely to have deterioration in their mental capacities as they aged, compared to individuals who were generally happier and less stressed. ❤️



Walking: It's in Your Genes!

What You Can do to Increase Your Activity Level

By James H. O'Keefe, M.D.



Our first pre-human ancestors stood upright and began to walk about 2.5 million years ago. Since then, nature has shaped our bodies to be highly efficient walking creatures. As humans came to inhabit every corner of our world by walking across, over, and around the earth.

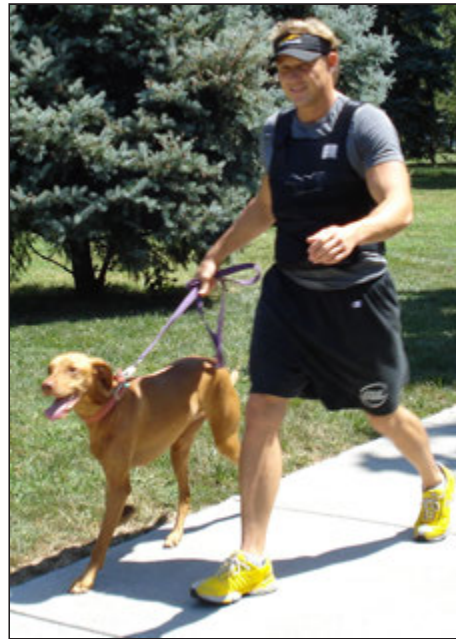
Only 150 years ago, 90 percent of the world's population lived out in the natural world or on farms. Like our ancient forebears, these people walked while they built their homes and cleared their land. They walked as they planted, tended, and harvested their crops and carried babies and water. They walked and ran as they gathered plants and hunted game. They spent much of their waking time walking, even when they wanted to socialize with family and friends.

Over the course of just a few generations, an eye blink by evolutionary standards, we have abandoned our legs as our primary means of work, play, and locomotion. You and I, and all of the people on earth, are designed by nature to walk intermittently throughout the day, and the latest research suggests that we would all be healthier if we still did.

A scientific consensus is building that emphasizes cumulative daily walking. Studies show that walking during the course of your daily activity can improve your health as well as daily workouts in a fitness facility. The health benefits associated with walking include lower risks for high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular

disease, joint disease, depression, anxiety, and death. The bottom line is simply that regular walking throughout the day will improve your health. On the flip side, inactivity, or being sedentary, leads to poor health and obesity.

Admittedly, high-intensity, high-level exertion provides benefits even



Corey Scott, a certified personal trainer who frequently works with our patients, takes his own advice, "Just move your body."

above and beyond those noted from just walking. However, the average American is either not interested in, or not capable, of performing a strenuous, heart-pounding workout that leaves them sweaty and breathless. On the other hand, a great deal of low intensity physical activity can provide most of the health and mental benefits of a high-intensity program, but it requires more of a time commitment.

For example, when you run for 30 minutes at five miles per hour, your blood levels of sugar and triglycerides (fats) fall dramatically during exercise and for about 90 minutes afterwards. If instead you decide to do a light activity, such as walking, you will experience the same benefits, although you will have to spend much more time at the activity and or do it intermittently throughout the day.

Walking is an available and accessible form of exercise for almost anyone, and it is much less likely to cause injuries than high-intensity exercises. Nearly all athletes who engage regularly in high-intensity sports at least occasionally experience significant injuries.

A recent study showed that dog owners who walked their dogs on a daily basis took 10 percent more steps and weighed six pounds less than dog owners who didn't walk their pets.

In a hurry? When the Cardiovascular Consultants cardiologists round on our hospital patients, we make a habit of shunning the elevators and taking the stairs instead. Often, our entourage of medical students and residents are grumbling under their breath as they trudge behind us. I tell them, "The stairs are quicker and the short bouts of physical activity we get traipsing up these flights of stairs are likely to be the most challenging exercise we will do today." ❤️

Taking Steps Toward a Healthy Heart!

The ideal goal for cumulative number of walking steps during the course of a day is 10,000 or more. Here's a look at the number of steps you accumulate doing various activities:

<u>Number of Steps</u>	<u>Activity</u>
2,000	Walking through the mall for 20 minutes without pausing
2,000	Walking your dog 1 mile
2,000	Going grocery shopping up and down the aisles for 45 minutes
3,000	Vacuuming for 30 minutes
3,500	Playing softball or baseball for 60 minutes
4,000	Walking briskly for 30 minutes
4,000 to 5,000	Playing doubles tennis for an hour
5,000 to 6,000	Playing basketball for 30 minutes
6,200	Golfing 18 holes with a motorized cart (leaving the cart on the path)
7,000	Dancing continuously for an hour
13,000	Walking 18 holes of golf



CardioGT: New Supplement for Improving Glucose Metabolism

Diabetes or pre-diabetes is the most important health epidemic facing Americans today. This problem has been worsening dramatically over the past two decades and now is present in 40 percent of adults over age 45, and 70 percent of people who have a history of heart disease.

These abnormalities in glucose metabolism are often associated with a cluster of risk factors including obesity, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol. You can prevent or improve abnormalities of glucose metabolism and diabetes with exercise, weight loss (especially from around the waist) and a diet high in fresh, natural whole food, and low in simple carbohydrates and saturated and trans fats.

Additionally, to help improve glucose metabolism, CardioTabs has developed an exciting new supplement, CardioGT (glucose tolerance), which when used along with diet and exercise, can help maintain a healthy blood sugar level. CardioGT has been formulated to contain safe, natural ingredients that have been identified to have a positive impact on glucose metabolism. Among these are chromium, alpha-lipoic acid, co-enzyme Q10 (CoQ10), magnesium, vanadium and cinnamon.

Chromium, vanadium and magnesium are all minerals that have been shown to improve glucose levels in several studies. Alpha-lipoic acid is sometimes referred to as the "antioxidant of antioxidants" and appears to help improve carbohydrate metabolism. CoQ10 is another powerful antioxidant that may be especially important for the heart. CoQ10 levels are generally low in people with diabetes and those who are taking statins. The spice, cinnamon, has been shown in randomized placebo controlled trials to improve insulin activity and reduce glucose levels, especially after meals. The CardioGT formula contains Cinnulin PF, a concentration of the beneficial antioxidants derived from cinnamon.

Diabetes, or pre-diabetes, significantly increases your risk for heart disease. CardioGT, when combined with a healthy diet and exercise, may help improve the long-term outlook for patients with abnormalities of glucose metabolism. CardioGT is available on the CardioTabs Web site (www.cardiotabs.com) or on your pharmacy shelf. ❤️

Get to Know Your Cardiologists...

Allen Gutovitz

For Allen Gutovitz, M.D., joining the practice of Cardiovascular Consultants has been a bit of a homecoming. "I grew up in the Waldo area, so I now am practicing just a mile or so from my boyhood home," Dr. Gutovitz says.

His parents, who were Holocaust survivors, came to the Kansas City area shortly after World War II ended.

After growing up in the community, Dr. Gutovitz left to attend medical school at the University of Illinois School of Medicine, Chicago, Ill. He performed his residency at the University of Illinois Medical Center, Chicago, Ill., and his fellowship in cardiology at Washington University/Barnes Hospital, St. Louis, Mo., where he also was a part of the school's teaching faculty.

After leaving the St. Louis area, Dr. Gutovitz spent 26 years in Topeka,

Kan., practicing cardiology at St. Francis Medical Center. There, Dr. Gutovitz built a thriving practice and developed a continuing education conference for physicians called "Advances in Cardiology." He also was instrumental in starting the Kansas Chapter of the American College of Cardiology, the state's professional organization for cardiologists. He also served as the organization's governor.

But it was family ties that brought Dr. Gutovitz back to his home town. "I decided to return to Kansas City because this was an opportunity to be closer to family," he says. Dr. Gutovitz and his wife of 36 years, Gail, now live in Mission Hills, Kan. They have three grown children.

Dr. Gutovitz says his experience

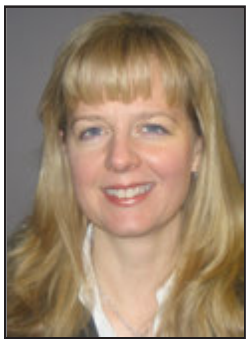
and perspective on cardiology are two of the most important resources he has to offer his patients.

"Cardiology has come so far since I started practicing in 1977. Now, we are much more aggressive with our interventions and medical management," he says. "It's exciting to see how the important advances made in recent years have been able to improve the quality of our patients' lives."

Dr. Gutovitz is based at the practice's Plaza office. He also sees patients at the North office. To schedule an appointment with him, call 816-931-1883. ❤️



Michelle Dew



As a young woman growing up in south Kansas City, Michelle Dew never imagined herself as a cardiologist.

"I had graduated from Rockhurst University with a liberal arts degree and was working in sales when I ran into a friend of mine who was in medical school," Dr. Dew explains. "He was telling me what he was studying and I thought, 'I could do that.'"

Soon, Dr. Dew had enrolled in the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) and was admitted to

medical school. Her decision to specialize in cardiology came during her second year at UMKC.

"My father-in-law had a heart attack, and my husband and I went to the hospital with him. I got a close-up look at how important the work is that a cardiologist does," she says. "That helped me make up my mind that this is the specialty for me."

After completing her residency at UMKC, Dr. Dew performed a fellowship in cardiology at the University of Arizona and joined the practice just a year ago.

Dr. Dew's interests are in issues that impact women's heart health and cardiovascular research.

Outside the office, Dr. Dew is married to her high school sweetheart, Ron Gregg, an electrical engi-

neer. The couple makes their home in Parkville, Mo., with their one-year-old son, Griffin. Dr. Dew and her husband enjoy running, and even participate in races such as the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

"Ever since my father-in-law's heart attack, we have made exercise and a healthy diet a part of our lives—it's something I want my son to grow up with," she says.

Dr. Dew is based at the practice's North office, 5844 NW Barry Road, Suite 230. She also sees patients at the practice's Plaza office. Additionally, she has some clinic hours dedicated to caring for female patients who are interested in cardiac prevention and maintenance. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Dew, call 816-587-2500, or 816-931-1883. ❤️

Four New Physicians Join Practice

Four outstanding cardiologists have recently joined Cardiovascular Consultants. They are:

Paul S. Chan, M.D., received his medical degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore, Md. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Harvard and the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Mass., and his fellowship in cardiology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich. Most recently, he was a staff physician for the Indian Health Service in Chinle, Ariz.



Dr. Chan is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He and his wife, Katie, have two children. The family recently moved to Kansas City.

Michael J. Giocondo, M.D., received his medical degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. He completed his residency training in internal medicine and fellowships in cardiology and clinical cardiac electrophysiology at Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Heart Institute, Houston, Texas.



Dr. Giocondo is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in cardiovascular diseases. He is a member of the Heart Rhythm Society and is a fellow-in-training member of the American College of Cardiology. Dr. Giocondo and his wife Anna, who is a physician specializing in internal medicine, recently moved to the Kansas City area.

Carlos E. Rivas-Gotz, M.D., was born in Caracas, Venezuela. He received his medical degree from the University Central de Venezuela and came to the United States in 1994 to complete a post-doctoral research fellowship at Yale University School of Medicine. He completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Farmington, Conn., where he served as chief resident.



Dr. Rivas-Gotz performed his fellowship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. He is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and is an associate of the American College of Cardiology. Most recently, he was an associate with the St. John's Medical Group Heart Care in Joplin, Mo. He and his wife, Dr. Susana D'Amico, and their two children, recently moved to Kansas City.

Alan P. Wimmer, M.D., received his medical degree from Duke University in Durham, N.C. Dr. Wimmer completed his residency in internal medicine at Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center, Lackland AFB in Texas. He performed his fellowship in cardiology and clinical cardiac electrophysiology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich.



Dr. Wimmer is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine in both internal medicine and cardiovascular diseases. He is a member of the American College of Physicians and is a fellow-in-training member with the American College of Cardiology and Heart Rhythm Society. Dr. Wimmer, his wife Heather and their four children, recently moved to the Kansas City area. ❤️

New Technology Allows Doctors to See Inside Arteries

Cardiovascular Consultants' offices on the Saint Luke's campus is one of only a handful of sites in the world where a novel technology that requires no cutting or catheters to see inside the heart's arteries is being used.

The test only takes about 20 minutes and uses external imaging to provide a state-of-the-art view of the interior of a blood vessel.

It also allows doctors for the first time to analyze different types of arterial plaque with a non-invasive scan, a process known as virtual histology. Plaques differ in their makeup. The ones laden with cholesterol and inflammatory cells are at especially high risk for causing a heart attack.

"With just one test, we can determine the percentage of vessel blockage, the composition of the blockage, and the proper treatment plan," said Tim Bateman, M.D., Imaging Medical Director of Cardiovascular Consultants. The high-speed imaging also reduces the patient's exposure to radiation and improves image quality.

To learn more, call Cardiovascular Consultants, 816-931-1883. ❤️

Cardiovascular Consultants Publishes Study

A Closer Look at What Can be Done for Patients with Leg Pain

The phrase, Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), is slowly becoming more familiar to all of us. If you are like most individuals, you are more concerned about blockages in your coronaries, or heart arteries, than blockages in your leg arteries. Thanks to a team of specialists and researchers at Cardiovascular Consultants and Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute, you can be reassured we are watching out for your entire cardiovascular health!

Those of you who experience leg pain should know that procedures, similar to those performed on

your coronary arteries, are available and may significantly improve your quality of life. Our group of specialists followed 300 patients who had a procedure to open blockages in their leg arteries. Their results showed over 80 percent of the patients studied had significant, long-term improvements in quality of life, physical limitations, symptoms and general overall health. Yet, many patients with leg pain are never given the opportunity to have these procedures. Instead,



the symptoms are ignored and slowly but surely the patient's quality of life deteriorates as their disease progresses. Worse yet, many individuals are never correctly diagnosed until they develop ulcers on their legs, which can lead to amputation. Cardiovascular Consultants is determined to raise the level of community awareness and help identify those patients with or at risk for PAD. Today, when you visit any of our office locations, you will be asked a series of short questions designed to identify patients with PAD. This alerts our physicians and staff during your examination. If you have symptoms of PAD, we may recommend that you have a simple, painless test called the ankle-brachial index (or ABI). The test consists of blood pressure readings in your arms and legs to determine how well blood is flowing through your leg arteries. This test takes just a few minutes and provides valuable information for our clinical team.

Remember, patients with PAD do not have to live with the ongoing discomfort of leg pain. There are options. Be sure to ask your Cardiovascular Consultants' health care provider for more information. ❤️

Risk Factors for Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

There are a number of risk factors for PAD, including:

- ♥ Age 50
- ♥ A family history of cardiovascular disease
- ♥ High cholesterol
- ♥ Diabetes
- ♥ Smoking (currently or in the past)
- ♥ Overweight and obesity
- ♥ Inactive lifestyle
- ♥ High blood pressure, heart disease or other vascular disease

Symptoms of Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

Although the most common symptom of PAD is leg pain that occurs when walking or exercising, there are other signs that you may have PAD. Be sure to tell your doctor if you experience:

- ♥ Numbness and tingling in the lower legs and feet
- ♥ Coldness in the lower legs and feet
- ♥ Ulcers or sores on the legs or feet that won't heal
- ♥ Have pain in the legs or feet that awakens you at night ❤️

The Art and Science of Healing Hearts

By Kenneth C. Huber, M.D.

When patients come to Cardiovascular Consultants, I would expect their first impression to be that of a highly-professional, state-of-the-art scientific environment. And they wouldn't be mistaken. After all, from high-tech tests and procedures to diagnostic labs outfitted with cutting-edge technology, our offices are ultra-modern workplaces for delivering 21st century cardiovascular care.

Yet, it is the non-technical aspect; the human side, if you will, of Cardiovascular Consultants that truly sets us apart. One of the most important beliefs that binds our doctors, nurses and staff together is our shared understanding that healing is both an art and a science.

The scientific aspects of healing are what immediately come to mind for most people today. Our physician-researchers dedicate exclusive time to pursue medical breakthroughs. Then the latest techniques and technolo-

gies are applied directly to the patient rather than a test tube on a university campus. Science brings clarity and a course of action to the medical problems we see each day.

The art of healing is far less tangible. It is much more about the human spirit, than the human body. It's a connection between the medical professional and the patient that grows out of trust and the respect. It is about listening and understanding each person's history and lifestyle, his or her concerns about what may be happening to them and their comfort level with the various treatment options recommended to them.

At Cardiovascular Consultants, we understand the unique and special attributes of the "human condition," the marvelous and often miraculous balance between the body and the psycho-social being in which it exists. It is the recognition

and respect for this "balance in all things" that drives our passion for

excellence, measured by the one standard that matters most: the best possible care for every single person who comes to us for help.

This passion for the art and science of healing drives us ever forward. Balancing the needs of our patients will always be a key focus for Cardiovascular Consultants. We hope that by providing multiple, convenient locations throughout the greater Kansas City metropolitan area and surrounding communities we will have the chance to develop a heart-to-heart relationship with you.

We consider each opportunity to serve our patients another step towards creating the future of cardiovascular care for the world, right here in Kansas City. ❤️



Blood: The Gift of Life

By James H. O'Keefe, M.D.

I have a relatively rare blood type, A-, and thus the local blood bank is often calling to remind me to donate when their supply is running low. For the last 15 years, I have been donating a unit of blood three or four times a year.

I like the idea that I might be helping someone in need, and I have always imagined that it somehow was good for me too—kind of like changing the oil in the car. In fact, recent studies suggest that you can improve your long-term cardiovascular health by giving blood regularly.

Many of us, especially males and post-menopausal females, can gradually accumulate too much iron in the body. Too much iron stored in the body can wreak havoc throughout your system by generating free radical molecules that accelerate the aging process and increase the risks of cancer and heart disease. Giving a unit of blood is an effective way to get rid of excess iron. It will lower your blood pressure, at least temporarily. Additionally, the screening process that you undergo each time you donate blood is a free mini-checkup that includes measurements of blood pressure, pulse, temperature, and hemoglobin level (to make sure you're not anemic). If you have congestive heart failure, angina, or recently have had angioplasty, donating blood is not a good idea. However, you can still give blood if you have a history of stable heart disease, or take medications for high blood pressure or high cholesterol. So rally your courage and roll up your sleeve. It's easier than you think, and the life you save might be your own. ❤️



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James H. O'Keefe, Jr., M.D., Editor-in-Chief

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Why a Coke a Day Might Make Your Doctor Dismay

A huge study published in *Circulation* (July 2007) found that Americans who drink one or more soft drinks a day - even a sugar-free or diet brand - are at strikingly increased risk for metabolic syndrome. If you have three or more of these five specific health issues: excess abdominal fat, high blood sugar, high triglycerides, low levels of the good cholesterol HDL, and high blood pressure, you have the metabolic syndrome, which increases your risk of suffering a heart attack or stroke, or developing diabetes.

One or more soft drinks per day heightens your risk of new-onset metabolic syndrome by about 45 percent, regardless if it's regular or diet soda.

The study included 9,000 middle-aged men and women followed for over four years.

One or more soft drinks daily was associated with:

- ♥ 31 percent greater risk of becoming obese, especially around the belly.
- ♥ 25 percent higher risk of having high levels of triglycerides or blood sugar.
- ♥ 32 percent higher risk of having low HDL levels (good cholesterol).

Daily consumption of sweetened soda seems to go along with cardiovascular risk factors. So drop the pop, and switch to water or carbonated water. If you need the caffeine buzz, try tea or coffee (hold the cream and sugar). ♥



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