



Your Newsletter from Cardiovascular Consultants

Spring 2008

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Cardiovascular Consultants' Biggest Loser!

How Diet and Exercise Helped One Patient Win Back His Life!

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

When I first met Jim Slayton nine years ago, he tipped the scales at 401 pounds. This good-natured, retired over-the-road trucker suffered from a long list of health problems including a very weak heart muscle—a disease known as cardiomyopathy. He had several other serious conditions including atrial fibrillation (an irregular heart beat), a leaking heart valve, sleep apnea, diabetes, arthritis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and gout. "I couldn't walk 30 feet without being out of breath, and exhausted," Jim said. "I felt pretty bad."

To be honest, as his cardiologist I was very worried that if we were not able to turn things around soon, his survival was in jeopardy. An emergency trip to the Mid America Heart Institute of Saint Luke's Hospital served as a wake-up call Jim will never forget. "I had been on the tractor out mowing the pasture, and when I came inside the house, I passed out," he said. When he arrived at the hospital, the gurney (a wheeled cot) collapsed under his weight, and in the cardiac catheterization lab, the doctors were concerned that he might be too heavy for the treatment table.

"That was pretty embarrassing," Jim said. "I made up my mind I

needed to do something about my weight, right then and there." When he returned home, Jim decided his



weight loss plan would include two important components of a healthy lifestyle—walking and a balanced diet.

At first, walking wasn't easy for Jim, but he started slowly and gradually built up his endurance. "I started by walking around the house twice a day," Jim said. Six months later, he was walking two miles a day. Today, he walks five to seven miles each day, logging nearly 2,400 miles last year alone. "When the weather is reasonable, I walk on the blacktop road near my home for about two hours. When it's bad, I walk for the same amount of time around the edge of my basement. I'm not crazy about treadmills."

Watching his diet was tough too. "You know how some people are alcoholics?" Jim asked. "Well, I'm a

food-a-holic. I think I was born heavy. I could eat all the time. The trick to losing weight and keeping it off is to stay away from unhealthy foods, and eat a balanced diet, including lots of fruits and vegetables. We don't overeat and now my wife Sandy and I are careful about not bringing home junk food."

One year after Jim's wake-up call, he had lost 150 pounds. Over the next year he shed another 65 pounds to reach his goal of 185 pounds; 216 pounds lighter than when he started his new life. And since then, he's kept the weight off by diligently sticking to his diet and exercise plan.

From a medical standpoint, Jim's multitude of life-threatening diseases nearly all have melted away along with his excess fat tissue.

His recipe for losing weight is exactly what we advised—a lot of exercise and a prudent diet. Jim said he knew he needed to lose weight, he just didn't realize how much better he would feel when he did. "Losing weight wasn't easy, but it has a lot of benefits," Jim said. "All of my health problems are gone. My clothes are less expensive and I enjoy life more, socializing with friends, fishing and going to auctions and antique malls. Walking daily and eating healthy have given me my life back." 

Rejuvenate Your Life by Activating Your Genes

By James H. O'Keefe M.D.

"Tough times don't last, but tough people do." Robert H. Schuller

In your genes, and I am not referring to your Levi's, you have DNA lying dormant that, when activated, can rejuvenate your body and reinvigorate your life. Nature equipped you before you were born with a set of unimaginably complex and intelligent instructions in the form of DNA. Contained within this blueprint is everything you need to take you to new levels of vitality and health.

All of your ancient ancestors had one thing in common—they were survivors who overcame daunting obstacles and hardships in their natural world. Your DNA is a legacy passed down to you from thousands of generations of the fittest individuals. You have the best of their collective genes, all meticulously spelled out within the DNA of your genome.

Yours is a bloodline of courageous souls who conquered tough times by growing tougher themselves. Their hardiness lives on in you, but you will never see it fully manifest while just coasting along on the path of least resistance. No, if you want to grow stronger, you will have to push yourself physically, like your ancestors did. Additionally, if you want to become more vigorous and resilient, you will have to consume fewer calories and more nutritious and natural foods. Finally, you have to avoid the victim mentality; and exchange any passive, self-obsessed, depressed, pessimistic, and fatalistic attitudes for a hopeful, helpful, can-do, upbeat and energetic outlook. Don't settle for a life of

dragging around feeling tired, broken, weak, ill, or overwhelmed. Unbeknownst to you, deep within your being you already have what it takes to restore vigorous health and well-being. This genetic destiny can crystallize into reality when you immerse yourself in conditions that more closely simulate the natural human existence of your ancestors. Through your actions and attitudes, you can speak to your genes and call forth those seeds that are coded for strength and wellness lying dormant within you.

A weak, wilting, and sickly cactus struggling to survive in the mild and rainy climate and the rich soil of the Pacific Northwest will automatically begin to thrive when transplanted back to its native Arizona desert. The parched desert with its unrelenting sunlight is a climate that would kill most life, but because these are the conditions for which it is genetically designed, the cactus not only survives, it thrives. This environment resonates with the cactus's genetic identity, thereby awakening dormant genes. Soon the plant regains its luster, resiliency, and vigor as it prospers again in its natural home. Nothing in the world will revitalize a life form—plant or animal—as well as returning it to its natural environment and diet.

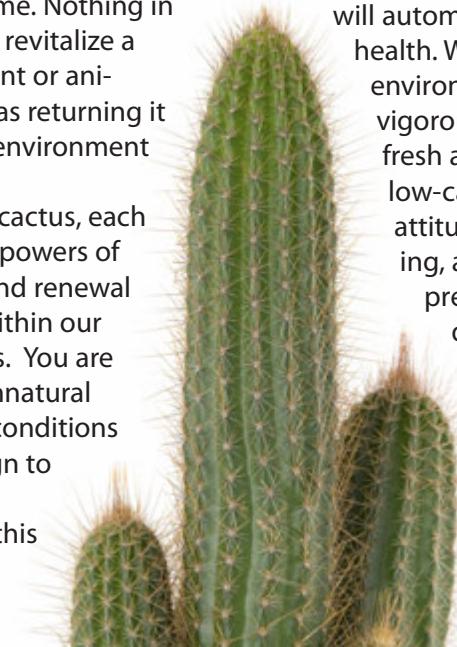
Like the cactus, each one of us has powers of self-healing and renewal lying latent within our chromosomes. You are living in an unnatural world under conditions that are foreign to your genetic heritage and this

bewilders your genes and causes them to malfunction. A cushy, inactive lifestyle with a glut of nutritionally barren calories signals our genes to lapse into the decay mode, predisposing to lethargy and disease. Rich, high-calorie foods and temporary reprieves from strenuous physical work were rare and unexpected windfalls for our ancestors. Today, these luxurious conditions, which were once uncommon treats, dominate the day-to-day life of most Americans. As a species, we have had insufficient time to genetically adapt to these modern affluent living conditions, sometimes referred to as 'affluenza'. Thus, most people can neither resist their instincts to eat too much and exercise too little, nor physically cope with the corrosive health effects of these behaviors. To be sure, we are becoming victims of our own success.

Stop Complaining and Start Training!

Getting out of your comfort zone and challenging yourself by reconnecting with the natural world will automatically revitalize your

health. When you engage in an environment that includes vigorous physical activity and fresh air, naturally nutritious, low-calorie whole foods, and an attitude of optimism, belonging, and purpose, those previously dormant and quiescent genes revive and reboot. These are the conditions that signal to your genes that spring has arrived, and it is time to kick-start your cells back



into the thrive mode, which leads to growth and regeneration.

Exercise has a particularly potent effect on activating these hibernating genes that can rejuvenate your mind and body. Daily moderate to heavy physical exertion has been estimated to substantially change the function of almost half of the 27,000 genes in the human genome. This means that a consistent regimen of daily exercise will literally rebuild a 'whole new you'. You have far more strength and resiliency within you than you realize. You have been pre-programmed to be able to rise to new levels of strength, vigor, endurance, and health. Rebuild yourself from the inside out by channeling your ancient ancestors and reactivating your genes.

"I am the grain of sand, becoming a pearl." Paula Cole

Steps that Activate Your Genes for Rejuvenation

1. Challenge yourself through daily exercise. Make sure you cross train by doing a variety of activities, including cardio and strength exercises and some stretching. Do some interval training which involves intermittent, short bursts of higher intensity exercise, with rest or lower intensity activity as you recover before the next interval.

2. After exercising hard, let your body rest, recover and rebuild. Shoot for 6.5 to 8.5 hours of sleep each night. Nap 30 minutes as needed and when possible.

3. Stay sexually active, but practice safe sex.

4. Cut down on your calorie intake. Get plenty of lean protein, fresh produce, and water.

5. Eat whole, natural foods. Avoid processed foods.

6. Minimize your salt intake (85 percent of salt comes in the form of processed foods).

7. Increase fiber consumption. Aim for 30 to 40 or more grams of fiber daily. Vegetables and fruits are the best way to get fiber.

8. Invest more time and positive energy in your family, friends, pets and gardens.

9. Get outdoors everyday for some fresh air. Try to get about 15 minutes of sunshine when possible.

10. Think positive. Be grateful that you are alive. Visualize a more vigorous and youthful you. Believe that your best days are ahead of you and start acting like it.

Fear is Darkness and Knowledge is Light

Uncertainty, particularly when it concerns your health or that of a loved one, often leads to fear and anxiety. Fear can disable you, and erode the joy and confidence you need to fully enjoy and participate in life. Harness the power of knowledge, and you will have the courage to live boldly. When you are frightened about your health, you need to seek answers rooted in powerful 21st century science. Knowledge can banish fear and increase your chances of living with the warm glow of great health.

In Italy during the Middle Ages, a profession known as a 'codega' existed. People would hire a codega for security and protection to walk in front of them with a lantern to show the way, and frighten away thieves and other dangers that might be lurking in the dark shadows of the night. Think of your doctor as a modern day codega. We are here to "watch your back" and make sure your vitality and future are not ambushed by some silent stalker like blocked arteries, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes. These and other health issues can only darken your future if you pas-

sively allow them to do so by ignoring them.

While you are striving to become the best you can be, don't ignore the single best source of objective information about your health by skipping your medical checkups. Think of your medical visits in a positive light—you need this kind of feedback to be the best you can be. We can help you to grow into a healthier person, a better athlete, a stronger employee, a more dynamic parent or grandparent, a more passionate lover, or whatever it is that you would like to become. Take responsibility for your wellness. Be vigilant and proactive about finding high-quality medical care and get regular feedback about your numbers and issues. Discovering and addressing any potential risks and/or chronic health conditions you might have are essential for ensuring your bright and vigorous future.

As doctors, we can reassure you with tests to some extent, but self-confidence about your wellness is a feeling that you create within yourself. True confidence in your health and physical capabilities is something you earn by setting moderately difficult personal goals and incorporating vigorous exercise and healthy foods and beverages into your daily routine. Self-assurance comes from proving yourself to yourself. Life is too short, and today is meant to be your moment in the sun. The feeling of strength and vitality coursing through your body engenders a sense of security and confidence in your ability to handle whatever life demands of you. 



The Pharmaceutical Industry Can be Your Ally

"Life is a journey not a destination; and the road is always under construction." Keith Cameron Smith

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

For the last two years or so I was being bothered by an occasional, irregular or skipped heartbeat at random times during the day. For quite awhile I tried to ignore it, hoping it would disappear, but it didn't and the palpitations, as we call them, started to really annoy and worry me. So I saw a cardiologist (just by coincidence I happen to know one). He put me through the typical cardiology routine that is probably all too familiar to most of you by now—EKG, echo, stress imaging study, blood work, etc.

The tests all turned up fine, but I was still tormented by these irregular beats. Those of you who know me understand that I really prefer to treat medical problems as naturally as possible. For years, I have been diligent about following a regimen of daily exercise and a very healthy diet (thanks in large part to my wife Joan). I also take CardioTabs and a statin. However, my cardiologist friend suggested I try a beta blocker on an "as needed" basis for the palpitations. I was a bit skeptical because these medicines are notorious for causing side effects like fatigue, but I was distressed about the issue so I gave it a try. Well, within 24 hours of starting a low dose of Carvedilol, the palpitations virtually vanished. I was relieved and grateful to have a safe

and effective pharmacologic solution to the problem that, while not life-threatening, was still very upsetting.

This episode gave me a new, very personal appreciation for the power of modern pharmacology. The life expectancy in America was 47 when my great grandfather, Dr. Henry O'Keefe, practiced as a pioneer physician on the plains of North Dakota 100 years ago. Despite his best efforts, he had little to offer many of his sickest patients beyond comfort measures and reassurance. This time of year he would arrive at a farmstead in a horse-drawn sleigh and in his small black leather bag, he carried not a single medication that could save lives.

Today, life expectancy in America is about 80 years, and scientists who study the issue attribute most of these gains in longevity to the vast and potent armamentarium of pharmacologic agents we have at our disposal that can eradicate infections, reverse heart disease, and treat and usually cure cancer, among other things.

Yet, the prescription drug industry today has a serious image problem. Indeed, a recent public opinion poll about the trustworthiness of various American business sectors placed the pharmaceutical industry near the bottom of the list; just one step above the tobacco and oil industries.

Some of this concern is warranted, but too often worried patients abruptly stop their drugs without consulting with their health care providers, which sometimes leaves them with dangerously uncontrolled medical problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. Most of drugs we

commonly use in cardiology have been so extensively tested that we have a high level of confidence in their safety and effectiveness. If you have concerns about your medications, please discuss them with your health care providers. We can either reassure you about their safety, or find an alternative treatment for you.

I like to emphasize the importance of taking advantage of the best of both worlds. It is essential that you do your best to take care of yourself by following our advice about lifestyle and diet. But often that is not enough to keep you completely healthy. When you decide to go it alone and shun prescription drugs, you are depriving yourself of one of the powerful advantages of living in the 21st century.

With respect to health issues, most people cruise pretty smoothly along the road of life in their youth, but by middle age the ride can start to get bumpy. Ignore major issues and by the time you get into the decades of your 50s or 60s (and sometimes even sooner) the wheels may just come off and your life will grind to a halt. By using the natural therapies first and adding the high-tech modern therapies when needed, we can almost always get you back up to speed and ready for the long haul.

The future will hold even more spectacular pharmacologic fixes. Be smart about working with your health care providers to use the therapies you may need to ensure your ride along the road of life is as smooth and trouble-free as possible. ❤️





Five Strategies to Boost Your HDL

Good cholesterol (HDL) is helpful in preventing plaque buildup and heart attacks. We have great medications (principally the statin drugs) for lowering the LDL cholesterol. However, the pharmacologic options for raising HDL levels are much more limited.

Certainly, your HDL is strongly influenced by your genes, yet lifestyle and diet are also very important in determining your HDL level. The bottom line is that although your HDL level is a crucial number in predicting your long-term health and longevity, at least for the next several years, boosting this level into a healthy range is mostly up to you. Here's what works.

1. Curb the Carbs

Eliminate sugar and other processed carbohydrates like white bread, rolls, white flour, white rice, cookies, and other sweets. These

high-glycemic index foods spike triglycerides and blood sugar and drag your HDL down.

2. Change Your Oil

The omega-3 fats in fish oil can raise HDL about 8 percent. Other healthy oils that foster higher HDL levels can be found in natural foods like avocados, ground flaxseed, extra-virgin olive oil, green leafy vegetables, and nuts (especially tree nuts like walnuts, pecans, almonds, and Brazil nuts). On the other hand, trans fats, like those in French fries and commercial baked goods, will lower the protective HDL levels.

3. Achieve and Maintain a Healthy Weight

Excess body fat, especially around the waist, will depress your HDL, and increase your risks for diabetes, heart attack and stroke. For every six pounds of excess weight you can shed, your HDL will rise 1 mg/dL.

4. Clean Up Your Act

Smoking tobacco will lower your HDL by 5 mg/dL; whereas kicking this lethal habit will quickly bounce your HDL back up to baseline. Drinking one alcoholic drink per day will raise your HDL by about 4 mg/dL. More alcohol will raise your HDL even more, but will increase your risk for other problems like cancer, stroke, and accidents.

5. Move Your Body

Exercise, especially aerobic exercise like walking, running, swimming and cycling, will raise the HDL level in a dose-dependent fashion—the more exercise you do, and the more intense the effort, the higher your HDL will rise. Ideally, we like to see people exercising aerobically 40 to 60 minutes daily, and doing strength training at least 20 to 30 minutes at least twice weekly. ❤

News from CardioTabs

A scientific paper we recently published in the Mayo Clinic Proceedings (available at www.cardiotabs.com) discussed the powerful heart and brain benefits of omega-3 (fish oil). This paper emphasized the use of a purified, concentrated fish oil, such as Cardiotabs Omega-3, for maximal benefits. CardioTabs Omega-3 is now lemon-flavored and enteric coated so that it won't cause the fishy burp and gastrointestinal upset complaints commonly seen with standard fish oil and omega-3 capsules. This is the highest purity fish oil available without a prescription.

Another nutrient that appears to be commonly deficient and crucially important is Vitamin D. Studies indicate that inadequate Vitamin D levels may increase the risk for developing high blood pressure, diabetes, and coronary artery disease. You should be getting at least 1,000 IU daily of Vitamin D. You can do this by taking just one CardioDaily multivitamin. Most multivitamins have only a fraction of this amount of Vitamin D.

CardioGT, a supplement to improve cardiovascular health, especially in people with weight issues, pre-diabetes, or diabetes, has shown excellent clinical results since its release. One tablet daily provides cinnamon extracts, co-enzyme Q-10, alpha lipoic acid, and healthy minerals that have shown activity in lowering blood glucose and improving vascular health. CardioSterol and CardioTea are safe, natural and effective therapies to lower bad cholesterol. CardioTea, as an added benefit, can be helpful in burning off belly fat.

CardioTabs are designed by cardiologists and regularly revised in response to the most current science on nutritional supplements. They are manufactured under the highest standards, and independently tested to ensure that what's on the label is what is in the bottle. Proceeds from CardioTabs are used to support research and education at Cardiovascular Consultants of the Mid America Heart Institute, including the **From the Heart** newsletter which is mailed to over 100,000 households and medical offices. ❤

The Biggest Threat to Our Children

The Hazards of Growing up in 21st Century America

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

To me, children are the joy and the light of the world. Their eyes sparkle with energy and curiosity, and the future belongs to them. By nature, we are hard-wired to worry about the safety and well-being of our children and grandchildren. We put so much time, effort, and love into raising these kids; in them we invest our hopes and dreams. So we buckle them in, smear on the sunscreen, strap on their helmets, and supervise their every move like watchful mother hens. Yet many parents unwittingly poison their children on a daily basis by giving them drive-through junk food and unlimited access to inactive pastimes like TV, computer games, and spectator sports.

Indeed, the modern world is a very dangerous place in which to grow up, but not for the reasons most people fret about. To be sure, abductions, accidents, violent deaths, serious infections, and child abuse are tragic events that still scar or end too many young lives. Yet the likelihood that a newborn baby will grow into maturity is far better today than it has ever been in the history of humankind.

The more insidious dangers that stalk our children are disguised as harmless pleasures: way too little physical play and fresh air, and way too much TV and junk food. Obesity and diabetes increasingly threaten to ruin the health and longevity of the new generation. Obesity among children has risen five-fold in just 25 years, and experts predict that one-third to one-half of all American children born in the new millennium

will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

These calamities result from a diet and lifestyle that are increasingly at odds with our genetic identity. Kids were meant to be very physically active. The single best predictor of mood in a long-term study of teenagers was their level of daily physical exercise—inactive kids tended to be depressed, whereas active youngsters tended to be happy. The most important step you can take to ensure the long-term vitality, both emotional and physical, of the children in your life, is by teaching them by example how to eat right and find their fun mostly through physical play.

Outdoor exercise was, by necessity, how all humans stayed fit for countless millennia. However, in recent decades most people have migrated indoors permanently, transitioning abruptly into an unnatural mole-like existence. Yet the natural world remains our native milieu and it has the power to energize and inspire our lives. The vogue terms for outdoor activities are *eco-therapy* or *green exercise*, and I am an enthusiastic advocate of this fitness strategy.

An English team of researchers recently reported that a 30-minute walk in a park boosted self-esteem and lifted depression, whereas a half-hour stroll in a mall actually *increased* tension. I can personally attest to the fact that when I want to



Photo by F.J. Glynn

relax, an indoor mall would be about the last place I would think of going. On the other hand, I find that walking outdoors with the kids through the Plaza in Kansas City, for example, to be invigorating and fun. Even more enjoyable is an outing to Loose Park with the kids and dogs to spend an hour walking, running, scooting, skating, climbing trees, or playing Frisbee.

Another British study found that being active outside in nature induces instant relaxation in 84 percent of people, both young and old. When you get out in nature and do something exhilarating, it's not that you no longer have worries; it's more like you just can't remember what you were worried about. Admittedly my kids love TV too, but I have found that rather than just tell them to turn off the screen, if I offer them an active alternative, they will usually jump at the chance to play.

If you could see what was happening in your kid's or grandkid's bloodstream arteries right after they gulp down a 'Happy Meal,' it would make you cringe. Disturbingly, a fast food meal of a cheeseburger, fries,



Photo by F.J. Glynn

and a Coke will cause dangerous rises in the blood levels of glucose and fats that immediately trigger inflammation, stress hormone release, a rise in blood pressure, and constriction of the blood vessels—even in apparently healthy young people. In fact, the stress to the arteries induced by such a meal is the same as smoking two

cigarettes. So when you take your kids out for a junk food meal, you might as well be taking them out behind the garage to smoke a couple of cigarettes. Do everything you can to see that the kids in your life eat more natural, unprocessed whole foods like vegetables, fruits, nuts, and berries and less of the ubiquitous tasty, but toxic junk food.

I have always thought of berries as nature's candy, and they are one of my kids' favorite foods. Children instinctively love candy, whose natural sweetness is a marker of a high-calorie treat that can fuel the energetic pursuits of youth. Among the nutritional superfoods, berries might be tops. Their intense, dark purple pigments that temporarily stain your

fingers and lips are also potent anti-oxidants that cool the damaging fires of inflammation and keep your heart, arteries, and brain youthful and healthy. Berries occupy six of the top 11 spots on the list of the best anti-oxidant foods, including tangy and tasty options such as wild blueberries, regular (cultivated) blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, and cranberries. Wild blueberries are the best of the berries, and you can find these little nutritional powerhouses at Costco all year round for a very reasonable price (about \$7 for a 3-pound bag of frozen wild blueberries). If your kids are clamoring for sweets, get in the habit of substituting berries and other healthful fruits for sweets. ❤️

Patients Say the Darndest Things...

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

Patient: "My wife got the medications mixed up around our household earlier this week. So the dog has been dragging around with low blood pressure; and you can be assured that I will be heartworm-free for at least the next 30 days."

One of my patients, a big and burly truck driver, told me, "Doctors these days are too skinny, especially heart doctors. Why look at you Doc, I bet you wouldn't last two minutes in a bar fight!"

Patient's entry on her medical history form: "Sometimes, just out of the blue, my heart will suddenly start racing 100 miles an hour and I feel like I could pass out. My doctor diagnosed me with 'Attack-a-cardia.'"

Dr. O'Keefe, "So let me get this straight. You had a stent placed in one of your coronary arteries five years ago and haven't seen a doctor since?" Patient (while looking at the floor and mumbling), "Right." Dr. O'Keefe, "Have you been taking any medications?" Patient, "Nope." Dr. O'Keefe, "Have you been checking your blood pressure or cholesterol?" Patient, "No." Dr. O'Keefe, "Sir, you are lucky you haven't had some serious heart issues in the interim. What were you thinking?" Patient, "I dunno." Dr. O'Keefe, "We can do a lot to prevent future heart problems, but you have to come and see us. Why has it been so long since you have been here?" Patient, "I was in prison until about eight weeks ago." Dr. O'Keefe, "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. May I ask what you did to land yourself in jail for five years?" Patient (glaring intensely at me and speaking through clenched teeth), "I tried to strangle the life out of some nosey jerk who was asking too many stupid questions!"

In the medical history form, one of my patients wrote, "I have mackerel degeneration." I mentioned that I didn't think that would affect his eyesight, but it certainly might make him smell like rotten fish.

As I was discharging a gentleman from the hospital after a heart attack, his wife looked over at him and said, "Bill, we need to learn from this episode. Specifically, I have learned that I need to ignore everything you say, and you need to listen to me." ❤️



Cardiovascular Consultants Physicians Take Part in Clinical Research

Zilver® PTX™

Steven Lester, M.D., an interventional cardiologist with Cardiovascular Consultants, is leading an investigational trial at the Mid America Heart Institute of Saint Luke's Hospital to determine whether drug-eluting stents can benefit patients who suffer from peripheral artery disease (PAD).

The Heart Institute is one of 56 sites across the U.S. taking part in the trial and the only hospital in the region involved.

The trial is designed to determine the safety and effectiveness of the Zilver® PTX™ Drug-Eluting Stent in treating blockages above the knee in the major artery in the thigh. The stent, which acts as a scaffold, stays in place to prop the artery open and allow blood to flow. This helps eliminate the need for repeat angioplasty and stent procedures, or more invasive treatment such as bypass surgery.

The Zilver® PTX™ Drug-Eluting Stent is coated with paclitaxel, which has been used successfully to reduce the risk of re-narrowing of the coronary arteries. In many cases, PAD patients who have been treated with balloon angioplasty and stenting experience re-narrowing of the arteries. The Zilver® PTX™ Drug-Eluting Stent Trial will test whether the combination of the stent and paclitaxel will keep arteries open over time.

"This research investigates the benefits of combining a clinically proven medical device and a pharmaceutical agent in a new way," Dr. Lester said. The femoral artery on

which the Zilver® PTX™ trial focuses is the most commonly diseased artery in the body, so the potential benefit is enormous, according to Dr. Lester. "We treat hundreds of patients annually at the Heart Institute for superficial femoral artery disease. These study results could lead to a new treatment for a disease that affects millions of adults around the world."

Patients are currently being screened for inclusion in the trial.

AWARE Trial

The Heart Institute also is among 50 centers nationwide recruiting patients with chronic angina (chest pain) due to coronary heart disease to participate in the AWARE clinical trial. The AWARE trial will study the effects of Generx™ (Ad5FGF-4) in women for the potential treatment of myocardial ischemia (insufficient blood flow within the heart muscle), which gives rise to angina.

Generx is an investigational product designed to promote angiogenesis, a natural process of blood vessel growth within the heart muscle.

The AWARE trial is a randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind study that will enroll approximately 300 women with recurrent stable angina pectoris who are not candidates for stenting or bypass surgery and who are already receiving excellent drug therapy. The primary endpoint will be measured during an exercise treadmill test at baseline and at six months. The secondary endpoints will include a measure of myocardial blood flow using SPECT (single photon emission computed tomography), as well as other measures of angina.

"Generx is believed to work by stimulating the growth of new blood vessels in the heart, increasing associated blood flow to the heart muscle and improving the chest pain, called angina that is caused by blocked coronary arteries," stated interventional cardiologist Aaron Grantham, M.D., trial investigator, Cardiovascular Consultants.

Call 816-932-0218 for more information about the study and eligibility. ❤

Life in the Fast Lane...

While walking in downtown Kansas City, I noticed an elderly lady who looked like a real character and I asked her, "You seem so relaxed and happy, what's your secret?"

She replied, "Each day I down a pint of Jack Daniels and smoke 10 cigars. I snort cocaine to wake and up and smoke weed before bed. And, I follow the *Fries Diet*--if it don't come with fries, I don't eat it."

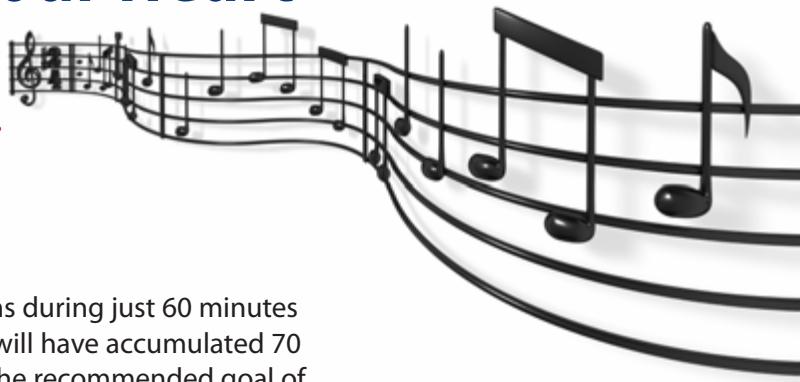
I said, "Wow, that's amazing; how old are you?" She answered, "Twenty-eight." Dr. O'Keefe ❤



Feel the Rhythm in Your Heart

By James H. O'Keefe M.D.

"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass; it's about learning to dance in the rain."



I have been impressed by how people seem to derive real health benefits, both physical and mental, from incorporating music into their daily lives, whether it is in the form of dancing, singing, making or even just listening to music. Rhythm comes naturally to us.

The first sound that entered your awareness, even before you were born, was the rhythmic "lub-dub...lub-dub" of your mother's heart beat. One hundred thousand times each day your heart drums out the sound track of your life, most of the time only in the background of your consciousness. The average heart beats three billion times before it gives up the ghost; if you treat yours right, it may pump four billion times.

Each of us was born with a song in our heart. You don't have to tell young kids to dance when you put on some fun music, they naturally will just move to the beat. In the cold dark winter days when my kids are getting stir crazy, I coax them down to the basement and ask them to put on upbeat music and they will dance and Hula-Hoop themselves into a sweat without any cajoling. Rekindle that song within you; music can lift your spirits, melt stress, and lower blood pressure. Exercise can be fun when it is more like play and less like work; and dancing is all about having fun. Dancing is an ideal form of exercise. If you dance continuously for an hour you will take about 7,000 steps,

which means during just 60 minutes of fun, you will have accumulated 70 percent of the recommended goal of 10,000 steps for an entire 24-hour period.

Recent research shows that regular dancing improves health on multiple levels, from improved balance and better physical fitness, to more flexibility and a brighter more energetic mood. *Dancing with the Stars* is currently all the rage among TV viewers, and the celebrities on the show provide some dramatic examples of how dancing can improve fitness from week to week. Marie Osmond lost 31 pounds while participating in the competition; and she fainted during one episode, probably because her blood pressure was getting back down to levels that her cardiovascular system had not seen since she was a teenager.

It's easier than ever to learn to dance, whether in a local dance studio or gym, or in the comfort of your own home with the help of online options. Learntodance.com, dancetv.com, and learning2dance.com are Web sites that offer free video dance lessons for everything from ballroom dancing, to the fox trot, to salsa, and even break dancing. YouTube.com is another great online site for learning how to dance. While at YouTube, check out the wildly popular "The Evolution of Dance," a wacky and entertaining video clip by a comedian doing a six-minute dance medley that has been viewed 80 million times.

I love music and I find that just listening to songs that I enjoy makes me relaxed and happy. Still I don't dance much in public because I am a terrible dancer—choreographically challenged from birth I guess. A lot of people, including me, are self-conscious about getting up and dancing in front of a crowd. I remember one patient who complained during a visit that he was too shy to square dance. His wife looked over at him and said: "Orville, get over it! Nobody's watchin' you. In fact, you would be shocked to know just how infrequently anyone ever thinks about you. You need to just relax and have fun." Think of dancing as a chance to blow off some steam and to celebrate with a friend. Dancing is like smiling, even if you are in a bad mood, if you force yourself to do it, it's hard not to feel happier.

Fitness, balance, rhythm, romance, and fun—dancing can do it all for us, we just have to get over our inhibitions and re-awaken the song in our heart. One of my goals in life is to someday learn how to dance, and Joan and I are planning to take a 'dancing for dummies' class one of these years. In the meantime, I'll just be dancing in the basement with my daughters Kathleen and Caroline while they blare the likes of Hannah Montana over the speakers. Thankfully, they both have a great sense of rhythm that they must have inherited from their Mom. ❤️



Walk it Out!

By Michelle Dew, M.D.

What is it that almost all of us are able to do regardless of

age, gender, size, work or neighborhood? WALK! Your feet were made for walking and walking adds physical activity into your day, boosting your overall health and mental well-being! A moderate amount of exercise, such as walking, enhances your heart health by increasing "good" cholesterol HDL levels, decreasing triglyceride levels, lowering blood pressure, and assisting in controlling your weight.

So what's the prescription? The first step is to know the facts!

One pound of fat is equal to 3,500 calories – to lose one pound a week, simply cut out 500 calories each day.

Walking 10,000 steps each day assists you in maintaining your current body weight with a portion-controlled diet. To lose weight, increase your steps by walking 30 to 40 minutes per day.

The correct posture, arm swing, and stride add up to a higher intensity of exercise and lowers your risk for injury.

Posture – lean slightly forward from the ankles – not the waist, keeping your head level and your chin up.

Arm swing – keep your elbows

firmly bent at a 90-degree angle and swing your arms from the shoulder.

Stride – keep your stride long and smooth by keeping your supporting leg straight as your body passes over it and let your hip rise and relax. As your leg moves to the rear, keep your foot on the ground as long as possible before pushing off.

Don't forget to stretch first to warm up your muscles. Make a personal commitment to yourself to get started and schedule daily walks into your life. It doesn't take fancy clothes – only a good pair of shoes and personal motivation. Partner with a friend, family member or your dog. Make a date and get out there and walk! You won't regret it! ❤️

Saint Luke's Gears Up for Women in Training

Now in its 11th year, Saint Luke's Women in Training program offers women of all ages and fitness levels the chance to talk with medical experts about health issues, participate in a self-paced walk/run, and complete a series of heart health tests.

The program will have three locations again this year.

• Mondays—March 31 to May 19—Saint Luke's South, Overland Park

• Tuesdays—April 1 to May 20—Saint Luke's East-Lee's Summit

• Thursdays—April 3 to May 22—Saint Luke's Northland Hospital-Barry Road Campus

Each session meets from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The evening opens with a 15-minute talk by medical experts, who share the latest information on heart, breast, bone, and bladder health, as well as nutrition, diabetes, and injury prevention. Next is an hour-long walk/run at each woman's pace.

An optional, but valuable part of the program, is a heart screening with the Muriel I. Kauffman Women's Heart Center. For no additional charge, participants receive a complete: cholesterol profile, thyroid and glucose check (for diabetes), blood tests, blood pressure check, and weight and waist circumference measurement.

Michelle Dew, M.D., a cardiologist with Cardiovascular Consultants who specializes in women's cardiac care, spearheads this part of the program. She's built in a six-month follow-up screening plan to keep participants motivated.

"Raising awareness about heart health is great, but we also want to see how much we can affect results," Dr. Dew said. "It's easier when you can follow a plan."

The total cost of the program is \$35. To register, visit www.saintlukeshealthsystem.org, or call NurseLine at 816-932-6220. ❤️





New CEO Fosters Team Spirit for Practice

By Ken Huber M.D., President, Cardiovascular Consultants

As patients at Cardiovascular Consultants, you routinely meet with our physicians and support staff, but one of the few people you rarely get to know is our chief executive officer. That is why I am happy to introduce you to Michael Samms, our new CEO. We believe Michael will help us continue providing the cutting edge patient care, technology and research you have come to expect from us.

Michael has a long history in health care, beginning as an emergency medical technician. He also spent some time in the banking industry, then found his way back into health care as the director of business operations at the Wichita Clinic. In the '90s, he worked in physician services for Health Midwest, and in 1998 he was asked to become chief

operating officer, then chief executive officer, of that health system's Physician Hospital Organization (PHO), growing it from 1,000 to more than 2,400 physicians by the end of his tenure. He also created the Central Credentials Verification Office (CVO), encompassing credentialing for the nine-hospital Health Midwest system.

Michael's practice management style of servant-leadership involves keeping the right people in the decision-making process (including front-line people); being proactive rather than reactive in decision planning; and mentoring management to find positive ways to bring each employee to reach his or her highest level of performance possible. This creates a team spirit, an atmosphere where employees love to work, making meeting our patients' needs rewarding and enjoyable. We

invite you to learn more about his management style and lessons learned in his published book, "A Better Tomorrow, Today."

Michael's goal is to continue increasing awareness of the vital cardiology services available through the Mid America Heart Institute of Saint Luke's Hospital and Cardiovascular Consultants' physician network.

"I am excited to be associated with the physicians, providers and staff at Cardiovascular Consultants who are known for providing the highest quality of patient care," Michael said. "I enthusiastically look forward to continuing the practice's rich history, providing outstanding patient care to our community and beyond." 



Michael Samms, CEO

Dr. Bateman Part of Effort in Setting Standards for Imaging Performance

Leadership efforts by Timothy Bateman, M.D., have helped Cardiovascular Consultants earn national recognition for becoming one of the first two accredited laboratories in the U.S. for computed tomography (CT) of the heart and blood vessels, including coronary calcium scoring, cardiovascular CT angiography, whole body CT, and other CT. The accreditation was granted in January by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Computed Tomography Laboratories (ICACTL).

At the request of ICACTL, Dr. Bateman volunteered the CT program at Cardiovascular Consultants, including three separate CT sites of service, to be reviewed as a "pilot" in the process of establishing new national quality standards for CT, a rapidly evolving area of imaging. "The pilot labs assumed an active leadership role in determining where the bar should be set in terms of quality and safety in CT imaging," said Dr. Bateman.

Increasingly, medical insurance companies are making accreditation a condition for reimbursement, and medical experts like Dr. Bateman are instrumental in defining quality criteria appropriate to the field. "Everything from the lab's organizational structure, safety and accuracy of the imaging equipment, training of imaging technologists and physicians, and outcomes performance measurements are indicators of a quality program. Accreditation can help reduce inappropriate imaging by serving as a barrier to labs that do not meet standards," said Dr. Bateman. As an internationally renowned imaging specialist, Dr. Bateman has contributed over the past decade to the development of many of these standards as an advisor to national accrediting bodies interested in establishing performance criteria for imaging modalities. 





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

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Web Site Helps You Communicate With Us

The Web is fast becoming an efficient and effective way to communicate with our patients. That is why we are expanding its capabilities, adding two important features--online patient scheduling and an electronic newsletter.

First, you can request an appointment online with your provider by visiting www.cc-pc.com. Just click on "Request an Appointment" (located at the left in red), complete and send in the online form. A scheduler will contact you by 5 p.m. the next business day to book the appointment. This link also offers a list of our major insurance carriers.

Second, because we believe information and education are important to helping you keep your heart healthy, we are making **From the Heart** available electronically. To receive the latest edition of the newsletter in a pdf format, just click on "Newsletters" (located in the lower left of your screen). From there, you can sign up to receive your electronic copy. All we need is your name, home address and e-mail address. Under newsletters, you also will find back issues of **From the Heart**, just in case you're looking for the information or would like to share the newsletter with a friend.

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