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# When Your Life Has a Mission, Your Heart is Happy

## Staying Connected to the Tree of Life

By James H. O’Keefe, M.D.

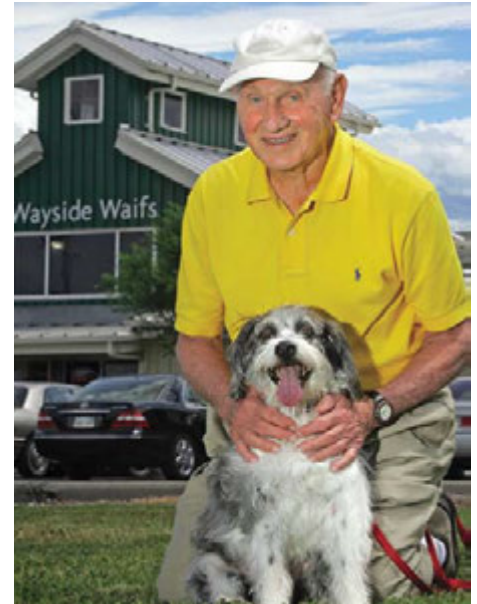
**H**arold is a good friend who inspires me with his passion for life. At age 89, he continues to work full time, though he retired from his paying job 10 years ago. Now he invests a great deal of his talent, energy, time and money into an organization called “Wayside Waifs.”

Harold is the chief executive officer of this not-for-profit animal shelter that is dedicated to finding loving and safe homes for untold numbers of stray or unwanted dogs and cats. Each morning Harold awakens knowing that his mission is making a difference for our community; bringing love, security and companionship for thousands of animals each year, and perhaps even more benefits to the kind and generous people who adopt these pets. His eyes still sparkle with vitality and vigor, and he walks with a spring in his step. He thinks, acts, exercises, and lives like a man 30 years younger.

Harold will tell you that his love for family, friends, and Wayside Waifs is the driving force that fuels his passion for life. When he asked me during his most recent office visit, “How’s my health,

Doc?”, I replied, “Harold, if we are not someday celebrating your 100<sup>th</sup> birthday together, I will feel as though I have failed you.”

Maybe we all can’t contribute on the scale that Harold does, but even a little investment in the life around us has the power to bring strength and vitality to our lives. All living things are interconnected through the great tree of life, and through our connections with other life, flows a vital force that sustains each of us like the sap of a tree sustains its leaves. Whether or not we are aware of it, each one of us is woven into this network of life; and if we ignore this reality and become isolated and too self-centered, we grow ill and unhappy. Scientists studying this issue find that lonely,



*Harold and Sophie keep each other happy and healthy.*

cut off, and depressed people tend to be unhealthy and die younger. In other words, if you lose interest in life, life may lose interest in you. An isolated individual is a dead-end in the grand scheme of life. On the other hand, individuals contributing to and striving for the welfare of others is the force that allows life to continue to thrive. Through its profound instinctive wisdom, life has a way of investing energy and vitality in those who are contributing positively to their community of life, and withdrawing it from those who are not.

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# Mission *continued from page 1*

The islanders of Okinawa have an average lifespan of 86 years, making them one of the longest living and healthiest cultures in the world. Okinawans suffer 80 percent less heart disease, 75 percent less breast and prostate cancer, and 33 percent less dementia than their counterparts here in the U.S. The Okinawans attribute their exceptional longevity and vigor to a concept they call “ikagai,” or having a strong sense of purpose. They feel that an ongoing personal mission or destiny is essential for staying youthful and strong as they grow older.

Certainly, their traditional diet rich in vegetables and fish, and an active way of life, are factors in the Okinawans’ excellent health. Yet, the people of this remarkable culture feel their longevity is most closely tied to “ikagai,” literally translated as “that which makes one’s life worth living.” A cause or a passion bigger than ourselves can help us transcend the selfish, introspective nature of an isolated human life, and can bring us lasting vitality and exceptional longevity. The Okinawans have a reciprocal support network of family, friends and neighbors, and this brings a sense of belonging to these people. They tend to put family first and prioritize the cultivation and maintenance of lifelong friendships and social bonds.

My mother, Leatrice, is a nurse by profession, and nurturing others has always come naturally for her. When my father passed away five years ago she lost her best friend and soul mate. Understandably, she was depressed and anxious for a year or so afterwards, but she gradually regained her spark by re-investing her life in others. She

volunteers regularly at both the nursing home and the church in our hometown of Grafton, North Dakota, a vibrant little community of 3,500 people near the Minnesota and Canadian borders. She regularly entertains company or travels to visit her family and friends, cares for a dog, and loves to garden (during the four months of the year that the temperature stays above freezing). Recently, she confided to me that she believes that she has been blessed with good health so that she can be there for many of her friends and neighbors who are getting older and sometimes find themselves struggling with serious health issues. Leatrice has a gentle, happy, and compassionate manner, and she spends her days providing good humor, hope, and kind-hearted support for her friends and family, and in this way she finds strength and peace of mind for herself. To me, she has always seemed like the closest thing I have ever known to an angel, though I suppose it’s natural for a person to feel that way about his or her own mother.

Here’s the critical factor: no outside entity determines whether or not you are still important to the web of life, you do. It’s your own being, conscious or subconscious, that judges whether you are still a dynamic life force that needs to continue to prosper. Living with a sense of purpose sends a signal to your brain that says, “I still matter,” and this engenders attitudes and actions that resonate throughout your being, revitalizing your body, reinvigorating your mind, realigning your hormones, and helping you to thrive.

Want to grow stronger? Give your energy to someone or some



*Leatrice, and her granddaughter, Caroline, spend some quality time cuddling.*

cause beyond yourself. Want to be happier? Stop worrying so much about your own self-interests and try to make someone else’s life happier or easier. You don’t have to change the world; you just need to call your friend.

My father-in-law Leonard, who lived to be 94 years old, used to say, “Keep on walkin’ and keep on squawkin’; and don’t look back.” Indeed, a recent study found that people who made a habit of visiting with acquaintances, either in person or by phone, were significantly protected from Alzheimer’s disease. Take good care of the people you love. Happiness doesn’t come from possessions or power, but instead from the relationships you develop with the people in your life whom you love and respect.

Tend a garden, or walk your dog, or feed the birds, or give your elderly neighbor a ride to the grocery store. You get what you give—it’s one of the fundamental laws of nature, and it is a force that animates life. Tap into it and you will thrive and prosper; ignore it and you may wither like the leaf that becomes disconnected from its tree. ❤️

# Be a Real-Life Hero: Jump-start a Heart!

By James H. O’Keefe, M.D.

Only one thing could have saved Tim Russert after he collapsed in the television studio. Tragically it was hanging only a few feet away from the bystanders who watched helplessly as Russert’s chances for survival slipped away while they waited for paramedics to arrive. He suffered a cardiac arrest, triggered by a coronary artery that had just recently clotted shut, leaving a large segment of his heart starving for blood and oxygen.

When the heart stops beating, the only intervention that will reliably restore the heartbeat and blood circulation is an electric shock. How quickly this shock is delivered after a cardiac arrest is critically important: for each minute that ticks by from the time of the cardiac arrest to the delivery of the shock, the chances for survival diminish about 10 percent. So if you can shock a cardiac arrest victim within the first minute or two, almost all survive; if seven minutes go by, the chances for revival with a shock fall to 30 percent; by 10 minutes, almost nobody survives.

Tim Russert was surrounded by his co-workers while he was preparing to go on air for a TV show when he collapsed, and an automatic external defibrillator (AED) was just a few steps away. Whether the on-lookers forgot about the AED, or were unfamiliar with its operation, or were just paralyzed by fear in the heat of the moment is unclear. One thing is clear—Russert’s untimely and unnecessary death should serve as a wake-up call to the nation about the growing availability of AEDs in public places and work sites, and how easy these life-saving devices are to use.

Sudden cardiac arrest is still the single most common cause of death—killing 310,000 Americans each year. The only real hope for survival for anyone with cardiac arrest is an electric shock to “jump-start” the heart. You need not have ever seen one of these devices to operate it quickly and correctly.

If you witness a person collapse into unconsciousness, have someone call 911 while you look for and yell for an AED. If one is available, open up the case, place the two patches directly on the skin of the chest (one over the middle of the front of the chest and the other on the left side of the chest) and simply press the “on” button. The computer in the AED immediately analyzes the heart’s rhythm and automatically delivers one or more shocks as needed. If the person has only fainted, the device will just monitor the heart and no shocks will be delivered. If the AED is going to deliver a shock, it will instruct you to stand clear of the person.

If co-workers quickly had placed the patches, the AED would have restarted his heart, restoring the blood circulation, and he would have likely regained consciousness immediately. When paramedics arrived they would have rushed him to the hospital, where instead of ending up in the morgue, Russert would have been brought immediately to the cath lab and a cardiologist would have promptly opened the blocked artery with a stent and stopped the heart attack. Indeed, had the AED been used, Tim Russert might very well already be

back on the air by now with a new lease on life.

## Inaction Kills: Don’t Just Stand There, Grab the AED!

I am not implying that Russert’s co-workers let him down; most Americans are not aware of the AED’s importance, growing availability, and simplicity of use. Instead, I am pleading that his tragedy be recognized as a teachable moment.

Every second counts during a cardiac arrest and inaction kills. You can be a real-life hero and save a cardiac arrest victim by simply slapping two AED leads on his or her chest. Should you witness someone collapse, the first two thoughts to flash into your mind ought to be:

1. Call 911; and
2. Where’s the AED?

By the way, the prices for AEDs are falling (about \$1,300 today), and some of my cardiac patients are already choosing to buy an AED for their homes, rather than a fifth television, for example.

One final point: in the setting of a cardiac arrest, rescue breathing is not recommended

anymore. If a person is lying unconscious without a pulse and an AED is not available, while you wait for the paramedics to arrive, you only need to do chest compressions. While leaning directly over the victim, deliver downward thrusts, fast and hard, to the middle of the breastbone at a rate of about 100 times per minute. ❤️



# An Up Side to Tough Times

## Can \$4 a Gallon Gasoline Improve Your Health?

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

If you are cringing as you pump gasoline at \$4 a gallon into your car's fuel tank, you might take solace in the fact that scarcity sometimes can be a blessing in disguise. Heart disease deaths sky-rocketed for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, except for the lean years that began with the Great Depression and ended with World War II. Curiously, Americans' hearts grew stronger and healthier during those trying times between 1929 and 1945—and certainly not because of lower stress levels.

Scientists studying this unexpected reprieve in the epidemic of heart disease came to the conclusion that it was the rationing of sugar, butter, meat, and gasoline that halted the march of coronary disease across the land. During that harsh economic era Americans typically ate less of most foods, especially meat and processed carbohydrates; but did eat more fish and vegetables. And because gasoline was limited, they restricted their driving habits, and instead used their bodies for locomotion.

I recall my grandmother's stories about life in the 1930s and 40s and how she relied on carrots, tomatoes, beans, and beets from her garden to help feed her family. For many years Dorothy, who lived to be 102, also walked one and one-half miles to her work each day, and home again at night because it was her only option.

We can respond to some of the harsh economic realities we are facing today with the same frugal and industrious spirit as our ancestors, and can reap the health benefits

as well. Do less driving and more walking. Try to walk for some local errands, or ride a bike to the store if you need just a few items. Plant a garden. The foods you grow yourself will make you stronger and healthier, even if they never make it to your plate.

### Enjoy It or Lose It

Much of aging comes down to losing our abilities to perceive the beauty in our world and fully participate in its adventures. The directive, "use it or lose it," applies not just to your muscles and brain, but also to your heart, vision, hearing, balance, and to your senses of smell and taste, even of course to your sexual function. In a very real sense, you get what you settle for, so if you are finding it difficult to climb stairs, your body is telling you that you need to do more stair climbing to rebuild those muscles. It is not overuse, but lack of use, that erodes our sensory capabilities, physical strength, and mental clarity as the decades go by. In other words, people don't wear out, they rust away. Dust off the cobwebs by getting outside and using your phenomenal capabilities to their fullest, and you will find yourself growing stronger, sharper, and more perceptive.

### "The Nature-Deficit Disorder"

*"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."*  
Rachel Carson



Richard Louv, in his brilliant book, *Last Child in the Woods*, introduced the concept of nature-deficit disorder, which he described as the human suffering such as dulling of the senses, difficulties with mood, and higher rates of physical and mental illness caused by our diminished contact with nature. He contends that reconnecting with nature can remind us of how blessed we are to be alive, and can soothe, heal and reinvigorate us.

Nature, unlike television, does not steal time, it magnifies it. To feel fully alive, we need fully activated senses and nothing tunes up your senses like getting out in nature. One of my patients told me recently, "When I am outside working in my garden, tending my flowers and vegetables, I feel like I might just live to be 100." Indeed, the book, *English Gardener*, published over 300 years ago, urged the reader to "spend spare time in the garden, either digging, planting, or weeding; there is no better way to preserve your health."

Occasionally, I will wear my iPod when I am out running or walking, but I have learned that outdoor exercise leaves me much more relaxed and invigorated when I listen to the sounds of nature, whether it's the wind rustling the leaves, or the birds singing to each other, or the crickets, or even the rain. There is something magical about just taking in the sky, the clouds, the sun, the fresh air, and the trees.

When I am outside, I remind myself to not just look straight ahead, but look up at the sky, and look down

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## Bringing Balance to Life *continued from page 4*

at the grass. Feel the breeze on your face, the sun on your skin, the ground under your feet. These sensations in nature connect us to our ancestral home, our native environment. If you are near a stream, a lake, or an ocean, listen to the water flow, or watch the waves. Their power to mesmerize us lies deep within our genetic legacy. These were sources of life for our ancient ancestors, and they still have the power to bring us peace and happiness.

### Bringing Balance to Life

Many people notice that when they work too many hours, or too many days in a row they start to get unhappy, cranky, and difficult to be around. You may also notice that trying to focus on too many tasks at one time can leave you feeling nervous, numb, and overwhelmed. The human brain, amazing as it, can only focus on a few things at once; and can only hold one thought at a time. So it is very important to prioritize the essential things in our lives.

A balanced life is a key to a healthy and happy heart, and vigorous longevity. We all get out of balance sometimes, and this creates stress in our lives and predisposes to an irritable heart and a sour attitude. On the other hand, balance feels good and promotes health, healing, and happiness. The more often you can achieve and maintain a healthy balance in your life, the better.

Returning to the basics brings balance to our lives. Everyone has his or her own way of finding balance, but for most people it involves focusing on things like family and friends, rest and relaxation, fitness

and fun, and nature and nutrition. I have learned that when I make it a point to regularly devote time and energy to these priorities, I feel more peaceful, less stressed, more energetic, and “just happy to be alive”, to use one of my mother’s aphorisms. Especially when you are feeling stressed and under the gun, try to simplify your life by coming back to these fundamentals and see if restoring a healthy balance doesn’t help to make your heart feel more at peace.

### Rest and Relax

Get your sleep and rest. Sleep is a time for healing and rejuvenating. Modern life is too often full of

pressures, anxieties, and hassles and this causes our stress hormones like cortisol to rise. Cortisol raises your blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol levels and causes food cravings, especially for junk food. If you short-change your sleep, these stress hormones accumulate and can lead to obesity and many diseases. Deep and restful sleep calms your system, and resets these stress hormones back down to their healthy ranges. You awaken renewed, recharged, and reinvigorated. Problems that felt overwhelming when you collapsed into bed just eight hours ago often seem perfectly manageable in the bright light of a new day when you feel rested and re-energized. ❤️

### Women in Training Program Receives Award

The Saint Luke’s Women in Training program was recently selected to receive a special recognition award by the prestigious Snowmass Institute. The program is now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year and 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.

For more information about the Women in Training Program, visit [www.saintlukeshealthsystem.org](http://www.saintlukeshealthsystem.org), or call NurseLine at 816-932-6220. ❤️

### Newsletter Selected for National Recognition

*From the Heart*, this newsletter you receive from Cardiovascular Consultants, recently received an award from the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards Competition. The winners were selected by a national panel of judges from more than 4,400 entries, making this one of the 10 largest of all advertising awards competitions in the world.

This is the tenth time the newsletter has been recognized for excellence as a health publication. ❤️

# Cardiovascular Consultants' Physicians Strive to Prevent Sudden Death in Athletes

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

**A**s the father of four active, healthy children, I can only imagine how devastating it would be for one of them to die suddenly from a heart ailment. And yet, a little more than a year ago, my good friend and mentor Bob Conn, went through just such a tragedy when his 22-year-old grandson, Jordan Mann, died suddenly.

Jordan was an extraordinary athlete and student. In high school, he played soccer for Shawnee Mission East, and continued playing at Southern Methodist University in Texas, where he helped lead the team to the NCAA Final Four. He died in his sleep just one week after graduating from college in May 2007, with what should have been his whole adult life ahead of him.

It turned out that Jordan had an unusual heart defect that had never been detected utilizing current guidelines for sports screenings and physicals. However, it could have been discovered using the same ultrasound test many of you have had in our offices. An echocardiogram uses ultrasound waves to map the heart's structure and function. Why didn't Jordan have one? Probably because no one considered him at risk for sudden cardiac death; he always looked and acted like a healthy young man and talented athlete.

To give meaning to a life cut short, Bob's family has created a foundation honoring his grandson's memory; The Jordan Robert Mann Foundation. The foundation's mis-



*Jordan Mann, Nov. 1, 1984 to May 26, 2007.*

sion is to screen student athletes using diagnostic testing, to increase awareness about hidden cardiac problems and to create a paradigm shift in the way we evaluate our children. Current guidelines were established a generation ago.

"Our message is that this is a public health issue," Bob said. "We should think of this like immunizations. Each year, between 7,000 to 10,000 young people die from sudden cardiac death. In Italy, the use of ECGs during pre-participation screenings for college athletes has reduced deaths from cardiac arrest by 82 percent."

In fact, Jordan's foundation is working with Cardiovascular Consultants to develop a protocol that will justify ECGs as a requirement for students entering high school. This year, the foundation made it possible to screen 214 student athletes, providing funding for the \$75 test in exchange for voluntary donations. Out of that group, Bob said they found five who needed an echocardiogram or further testing to check for potential problems.

"An ECG is nine times more likely to pick up a serious condition than a regular physical exam, but it's perceived as too costly by some when you consider the millions of American kids who participate in high school and college sports," he explained.

Bob is working closely with Tony Magalski, M.D., our resident expert in athletes and heart disease, to change conventional practice. Tony and his team are building a database that will be utilized to convince the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) that pre-participation exams should be expanded and include a comprehensive history, blood pressures, physical examination, electrocardiogram and echocardiography.

Athletes with abnormal results would be referred for further evaluation. So far, they have worked with the University of Kansas to assess about 650 athletes; six were found to be at risk for sudden cardiac arrest. Their goal is to expand the program to other college campuses over the next five years.

"This is the only comprehensive database of its kind," Bob said. "We are in a unique position because we have such outstanding resources to support this initiative. Along with Tony, we are utilizing proven non-invasive tools to assess most of the top causes of sudden cardiac death. Ultimately, we believe what we are doing will save lives."

To learn more about the Jordan Robert Mann Foundation, visit [www.jordanrobertmannfoundation.org](http://www.jordanrobertmannfoundation.org).

# Heart Institute Research Reveals Risks for Athletes

**Y**ou might think that highly trained athletes would be the least likely to be at risk for sudden cardiac death, but research conducted at Saint Luke's Mid America Heart Institute shows that may not be the case. And to some degree, race can influence the likelihood of cardiac abnormalities.

The research, led by Anthony Magalski, M.D., Cardiovascular Consultants, and published in the June 10 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, revealed that electrocardiogram (ECG) abnormalities were present in 25 percent of all football players screened. Those abnormalities were two-fold more common in black than white, highly trained American football players, with race an independent determinant of abnormal ECG pattern.

Significant associations between player position and abnormal ECGs also were identified in the research. Abnormal ECGs were most common in wide receivers, defensive backs, and running backs, and least common in quarterbacks and place kickers.

The research was conducted in a group of 1,959 male collegiate football players participating in the National Football League (NFL) Invitational Camp from 2000 to 2005. The camp, also known as the scouting combine, includes the collection and evaluation of players' medical information, including medical history, physical examination, and an ECG. Players with distinctly abnormal ECGs were given an echocardiogram. Incorporation of

the ECG into pre-participation screening programs in the United States is a hotly debated controversy, said Dr. Magalski.

According to Dr. Magalski, physical training can cause changes to the size, shape and function of the heart, collectively known as 'athlete's heart.' In competitive athletes, it is important to distinguish such normal adaptive changes from heart diseases. Mass pre-participation screening can identify or raise the suspicion of cardiovascular abnormalities known to cause sudden cardiac death in sports participants. Sudden cardiac death is caused by an electrical malfunction of the heart



usually as a result of previously unsuspected heart problems that might potentially be detected by an ECG or echocardiogram.

On the basis of ECG findings alone, black athletes appear to have more abnormalities than white athletes. Many findings turn out to be a "false-positive" — or of no medical significance. But, some findings may be serious cardiac conditions. ❤️

## Heartening Advice

Recently, J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series of fiction books delivered a charming, funny, and enlightened commencement address at Harvard University one sunny June day in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Here is an excerpt from that speech and some related quotes:

*"Rock bottom became the solid foundation on which I rebuilt my life. You will never truly know yourself until you have been tested by adversity. The knowledge that you have emerged wiser and stronger from setbacks means that you are, ever after, secure in your ability to survive."* J.K. Rowling

*"Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."* von Goethe

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."* Margaret Mead

*"What we achieve inwardly will change outer reality."* Plutarch

*"As is a story, so is life: not how long it is, but how good it is, is what matters."* Seneca

# Exciting News in Treating Heart Failure

Each year, more than 550,000 Americans are newly diagnosed with heart failure, which compromises their quality of life and exposes them to an increased risk of death. Unfortunately, the number of people suffering from heart failure is only expected to grow, doubling by 2037.

But according to Andrew Kao, M.D., a specialist in treating heart failure with Cardiovascular Consultants, there are many exciting developments on the horizon that are expected to help improve the outlook for people with heart failure.

"Here at the Mid America Heart Institute, we are participating in clinical trials that will have a significant impact on the future of heart failure treatment," Dr. Kao said.

Dr. Kao and his colleagues also work to educate patients and the public about this increasingly common health problem by hosting a series of public forums on heart failure. The developments they discussed at their most recent forums included:

## ♥ Ultrafiltration

Heart failure is the inability of the heart to pump enough blood throughout the body, leading to the buildup of fluid in the lungs, legs and abdomen. Ultrafiltration is a method of fluid removal that is useful in patients who have excess fluid retention despite aggressive use of diuretics (medications to stimulate increased fluid excretion by the kidneys). Ultrafiltration is generally used when the patient has 10 or more pounds of excess fluid. This heart failure treatment has been available at the Mid America Heart Institute since

2003. Advantages of ultrafiltration include reduction in need for repeat hospital admissions and visits to the Emergency Room, and temporary reduced need for diuretics, which can help preserve kidney function.

## ♥ Heartmate II

This is the smallest artificial heart pump approved by the Food and Drug Administration. According to Dr. Kao, the pump weighs less than 12 ounces and works similar to the spin cycle of a washing machine, spinning the blood and providing better blood flow. The device can be used to support patients who are waiting for a heart transplant, or long-term. The Mid America Heart Institute staff is one of the few in the nation trained in using the device, which can provide adequate blood circulation, even if the patient's left ventricle stops working all together.

## ♥ HeartNet Implant

Dr. Kao compared this device to a "girdle for the heart." Made of the same material as heart stents, it is designed to shrink the heart by gently squeezing it to prevent further enlargement without affecting how it fills with blood. The device, which comes in 16 sizes, is placed using a two to three-inch cut in the left rib cage. The material that the HeartNet is made of actually "remembers" the heart's original size, like a rubber band, helping the heart squeeze blood out. The Mid America Heart Institute has enrolled the largest number of patients in the country in the clinical trial to test the device's effectiveness.



## ♥ Gene therapy

The Mid America Heart Institute will be recruiting patients for a new clinical trial to test gene therapy for treating heart failure. The therapy uses a deactivated virus to deliver genes to the heart that are missing or are underproduced. These genes may be able to help restore the heart's pumping function.

## ♥ Stem cell therapy

In the coming months, Dr. Kao says the Mid America Heart Institute will begin studying stem cell therapy to treat heart failure. This treatment involves taking a biopsy from the patient's leg muscle and growing stem cells from that muscle. Then, using a sophisticated three-dimensional mapping system, the stem cells are delivered to the patient's heart to restore pumping function. The advantage to this treatment is that the stem cells come from the patient, so there is no risk of rejection.

For more information about any of the exciting treatments available for heart failure, call Cardiovascular Consultants' Heart Failure Clinic at 816-931-1883. ♥



# Living Your Priorities

By Becky Captain, R.N., Nurse Practitioner, Preventive Cardiology Clinic



I saw a patient recently who was emotionally upset about her health problems. She is overweight, has high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and is now pre-diabetic. She broke out in tears, stating she felt “she had failed herself.” She felt sad that she had just let herself go over the past several years and now must fight to prevent diabetes and heart disease. How many of you have felt just that way?

In my practice setting, I am often the first person who tells patients they are diabetic, pre-diabetic, have high blood pressure or that they are obese with increased abdominal fat— all of which will lead to diabetes, heart disease and poor health if they continue their current lifestyle.

Please note, this isn’t the first patient to become tearful or sad over her current situation. In fact, both grown men and women experience this same emotion. The key point to remember here. . .and as I tell my patients. . .this is NOT about where you have been. . .but it is about where you are going.

Starting right now at this very moment we will make our health a top priority. Yes, this means making changes. Some changes might be a little uncomfortable and you may be on unfamiliar ground at times. But, not only will you add years to your life by making positive lifestyle changes; you may find a better quality of life too. Here are some basic priorities for healthy living and tips to incorporate them into your life. ❤️

## Three Steps to a Healthier Lifestyle

1. Complete some type of exercise on a daily basis. After a few weeks, you will find yourself looking for a chance to exercise. (That’s the spirit!) Change your way of thinking. Change your life so this is a priority.

If you are taking your children to baseball practice or piano lessons, etc., put on some walking/jogging clothes and exercise while they are completing their activity.

Instead of meeting your friends to “catch up” over dinner or after work for a few drinks- meet at the local community center, join a class together and see each other weekly. If you can’t afford a class, meet at a park and walk or jog together. It will not happen unless you MAKE the time.

Additionally, you will surprise yourself how many people will see you as a role model and work exercise into their lives too, all because you did.

2. Choose to eat healthy today.

Get protein for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Eat four fruits and four vegetables daily. These are the basics of healthy eating. This is your priority for your daily diet. Don’t go for the bagels, English muffins, candy bars or chips, until you have had the basics. In most cases you will not feel the need to eat so much of the other non-healthy food choices once you have had the basics. If you are still hungry, you can have all the vegetables you want. Then, utilize Joan O’Keefe’s *Three Bite Rule*. (Treat yourself to an occasional dessert, but you only get three bites).

3. Get six and one-half to eight hours of sleep daily.

I know it is difficult some nights to get an adequate amount of sleep due to demanding schedules. But it should be one of your daily priorities, as an adequate amount of sleep contributes to our daily health.

These are three basic interventions to healthy living. Make them your priorities. Your life and your loved ones are depending on it. My parents often stated, “Don’t lose sight of your goals or priorities.” It is so easy to do in this world today- so much hustle and bustle and so many distractions. It is important that you take the time to make the best decisions for your health on a daily basis. Your health today is a reflection of your past decisions, but your health tomorrow is a reflection of your decisions today.

No matter what our backgrounds are, our troubles, failures or successes in life, we all have the same inner guidance to change our lives and change our health for the better. ❤️

# A Man Ahead of His Time

**W**eston Price, born in 1870, was a man who was way ahead of his time. Dr. Price was a dentist from Cleveland, Ohio who figured out what was the matter with America's health decades before the average American even knew he or she had a health problem.

Heart disease, like dental problems, became so common during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the general public seemed to accept them as part of the inevitable landscape of modern life. Kids needed fillings for cavities, braces for crooked teeth, and wisdom teeth extractions, and sooner or later most people lost their teeth altogether.

Dr. Price found it odd that something as essential to survival as a set of sturdy teeth and healthy gums would be so poorly designed by nature and fundamentally flawed as to fail early in life. Indeed, he correctly surmised that the problems brewing in our mouths, like the ubiquitous troubles with high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol,

diabetes, and clogged arteries, all were scourges that grew out of a common soil: the modern diet.

In fact, cavities, tooth loss, gum disease, heart attacks and strokes are not part of the normal aging process; they are consequences of living in a world that is foreign to our genetic identity.

Dr. Price noticed a sudden deterioration in the dental health of many of his patients that seemed to coincide with the beginning of the 20th century, over 100 years ago now. He was convinced that the problem stemmed from an increasing reliance on refined white flour and sugar. He was so sure, that he quit his practice and traveled around the world, seeking out cultures where the people still lived as foragers and hunter-gatherers, as all humans once did.

## No Need for Dentists or Cardiologists

Dr. Price ventured to remote regions of the world, documenting his findings in the book, "Nutrition and Physical Degeneration."

What he found in people still living in the wild was a remarkable absence of the degenerative diseases that plague modern populations. In these cultures, people had virtually no need for dentists or cardiologists. There was no tooth decay, no high blood pressure and nobody was dying from heart attacks.

Interestingly, this vigorous health was not clearly tied to just one special diet, but was found among groups following an extraordinary range of eating traditions.

He reported that groups who subsisted on fish, seafood, and wild



game, vegetables, and fruits to be generally healthier than the agriculturists who ate more cereal grains, even when they were unrefined grains.

Dr. Price felt that the common denominator underlying the vigorous health of these native peoples was a traditional diet relying on fresh, whole, largely unprocessed foods from animals and plants grown on rich soils.

One of the attributes of pure sugar or white flour that has made these foods staples of the modern diet is that these tend to keep for long periods of time. Apparently, pests such as rodents, worms, and bacteria seem to be smarter than the modern human when it comes to dietary choices. A rat and a bacterium both instinctively understand that they cannot thrive, or even survive when eating a diet of pure calories with the nutrients stripped away. Yet this is the choice that many of us make unwittingly each day; and this is precisely how and why most of us fall prey to the host of degenerative diseases, whether in our mouths or in our arteries, that are commonly accepted today as a result of "just getting older." ❤️

## Four keys to a healthy diet:

1. Pick a protein at each of your three meals.
2. For each meal, pick at least two natural colors. Shoot for a total of five cups daily of fruits and vegetables.
3. Avoid all white flour and processed sugar.
4. Drink water, skim milk, or tea and coffee (decaffeinated after noon).

## The Supplements You Need for Vigorous Health

Scurvy, the disease caused by severe vitamin C deficiency, was a common and often fatal disease among the European sailors who lived on salted meats and biscuits during long sea voyages during the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Dr. James Lind, a Scottish surgeon in the British Royal Navy, proved in 1753 that lime juice, rich in vitamin C, miraculously banished all of the symptoms of scurvy including anemia, fatal bleeding spells, bone pain, and weakness; and quickly restored these sick young men to vigorous health. In contrast, the common practice today of ingesting daily mega-doses of vitamin C by a person with a normal baseline vitamin C level has not been proven to provide any health benefit. As a rule, supplementing a deficient level of an essential nutrient into the normal range will markedly improve the afflicted person's health and well-being; whereas using a nutritional supplement to drive an already normal level to an unusually high range usually results in no benefit and sometimes even causes harm.

It is important to note that the two essential nutrients most commonly deficient among the American population today are: 1) omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil), and 2) vitamin D. Not coincidentally, these same two nutrients, when used as dietary supplements, have been shown in large scientifically valid trials to improve overall health. Our ancient ancestors spent most of their waking hours out in the natural world, where the sunlight stimulated their skin to produce vitamin D. These people ate a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids from fish, wild game, nuts, and green leafy vegetables. Today, due to our largely indoor and sun-protected lifestyles, and unnatural diets, between 50 to 90 percent of us are deficient in vitamin D and/or omega-3 fats, and this predisposes us to a host of problems such as heart disease, cancer, and osteoporosis.

### Omega-3

For optimal health, most people require about one gram daily of EPA + DHA, the two most important omega-3s. This reduces risk of sudden death by about 50 percent, improves brain function and mood, and lowers triglycerides, among other benefits. CardioTabs Omega-3, a highly purified fish oil, is an ideal way to get the omega-3 you need, without the mercury and pesticides, or other toxins commonly found in fish; and comes in small, easy-to-swallow enteric coated capsules that are free from the unpleasant aftertaste commonly noted with most other fish oils.

### Vitamin D

The current guidelines for daily requirement of vitamin D (about 200 IU per day) are about 10 times too low. The latest studies show that most Americans need at least 1,000 IU per day of vitamin D to get their blood level of this crucially important nutrient into the adequate range, and many need 2,000 IU per day. Restoring vitamin D levels to normal will improve blood pressure and glucose levels, and may reduce risks for heart failure and heart attacks. One tablet of CardioDaily will supply 2,000 IU of vitamin D3 (the form of the vitamin that is best absorbed), along with about 100 percent of the daily value of most all of the other essential nutrients. ❤️

## New Physician Joins Practice

Roger Dreiling, an interventional cardiologist, is joining Cardiovascular Consult-



ants, providing services at our Lawrence office and at Lawrence Memorial Hospital.

Most recently, Dr. Dreiling served as the director of interventional cardiology at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center, Corvallis, Ore. He also worked as the hospital's medical director of its ICU/CCU and was director of the Samaritan Heart and Vascular Institute.

Dr. Dreiling received his medical degree from the University of Kansas Medical Center, where he also performed his internship, residency and fellowships in cardiology. He also received his bachelor of science degree in pharmacy from the University of Kansas.

Dr. Dreiling has published a number of articles and abstracts on cardiology. He is a member of the American Medical Association and the American College of Cardiology. Dr. Dreiling is a native of Hays, Kan. He and his wife recently moved to Lawrence, Kan. ❤️



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