



Uri Ben-Zur, M.D., F.A.C.C.

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This book was written with our patients in mind who struggle every day with the complications of their lifestyle choices, such as hypertension, diabetes, smoking, and obesity. It is based on a simple, but powerful (and proven) concept: proper nutrition and exercise are critical factors in controlling your cardiac risk factors.

We understand changing your lifestyle can be difficult when you are used to eating certain foods or maintaining the same level of activity for most of your life. However, with small consistent changes every day, the healthy benefits you reap for your heart and wellbeing can prove invaluable! We hope you use this book as a way to support and guide your progress toward a healthier lifestyle for yourself, your family, and friends.

With love from our heart to yours,
Dr. Uri Ben-Zur



The information contained in this book is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider before starting any new treatment or discontinuing existing treatment. Talk with your healthcare provider about any questions you may have regarding a medical condition. Nothing contained in this book is intended to be used for purposes of medical diagnosis or treatment.

Foreword

I am an interventional cardiologist, board certified in internal medicine, cardiology, and electrophysiology. During my current practice and as a clinical professor at UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, clinical professor at Western University of Health Sciences, and as a former assistant professor at Albert Einstein Medical College, I have worked with numerous residents, fellows, and medical students from various institutions across the country. Being a teacher of medicine has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of my career.

I myself was trained by the inventor of the pacemaker, Seymour Furman, M.D. (1931-2006). Without the mentorship of individuals like these, I would not be the physician I am today. This is because the relationship between a professor and a medical student is the pinnacle of medicine. Imparting my knowledge to the future generation of physicians enables me to both gain an awareness of general trends in medical education, as well as guide them in understanding common diseases. I would not be the physician I am today without the education I have received from experts in the medical field as well as learning's I have had from and with students as an educator.

I have trained thousands of students, who have each gone on to treat hundreds, even thousands, of their own patients. It is a beautiful thing to see the importance of diet and exercise being carried with them as they become the fine physicians of tomorrow.

This book would not have been possible without the hard work from my students and wonderful editors.

- Uri Ben-Zur, M.D., F.A.C.C.

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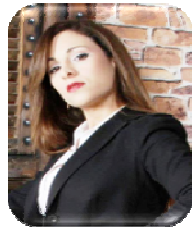
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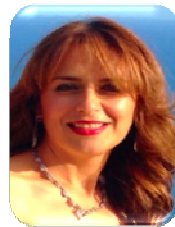
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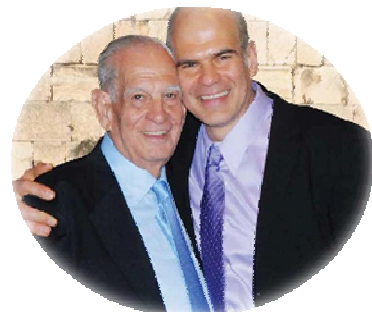


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With special thanks to my dad, Naim Ben-Zur, for being the inspiration of this book.



Student Physicians



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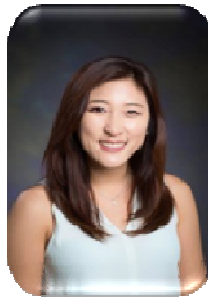
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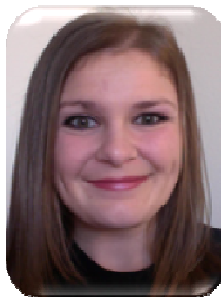
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Welcome to “Our Heart to Yours”



We understand switching to a vegan diet may seem hard, but any modification you can make will make a huge difference in your overall health. Just remember, you can do it!

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Introduction: It's Time for a Cardiac Revolution

“Over the years, I’ve cared for tens of thousands of patients. Many of them had life-threatening conditions that required surgical intervention. While I’ve been thanked countless times for saving lives through surgeries, I’ve never been thanked for saving someone’s life through a vegan diet. However, based on my experience, it is my firm belief that many disease states can be prevented and controlled with consistent exercise and lifestyle changes. It is time for a cardiac revolution™, centered on diet and exercise. It may be difficult for many people to change their diets, yet even small changes can significantly improve your wellbeing and may even save your life.

As a child my father would paraphrase Talmudic, "he who saves one life saves the world". I was never able to fully grasp this concept until I saved the life of a man who became a world renowned physician. This physician went on to develop various medications that saved the lives of millions. I now understand the ripple effect my father was describing. Had his life not been saved that day, who knows what would have happened to those millions of people that benefited from this amazing physician.”

~Uri Ben-Zur, M.D., F.A.C.C.



My Story

While I was a young boy, people often said that avoiding eating meat would cause a whole slew of health problems, which could even lead to death. As a result, while living with my parents, I felt an obligation to eat the food set on the table, although I never felt eating meat was necessary. Once I began an independent life in college and medical school, I chose to follow a vegan diet. However, I was still worried that I would develop severe medical conditions in doing so, since it was such a strongly held societal belief.

Little did I know this mindset would radically change with a coincidental decision to enroll in a nutrition class where I was the one male in a female dominated class. I remember the first day of class—looking to my left and right, and reveling in the joy of being a young man in such a unique environment—until the professor gave us our first assignment.

“Class, please write down everything you have eaten in the last 48 hours.”

My heart dropped. I had no doubt in my mind that I would be singled out with the worst diet in the class. You see, in the last 48 hours, I had eaten nothing but vegetables and salads—a diet many called “deadly.” As I waited for the professor to announce the results, I felt an uneasiness creep into my stomach. He started. “The student with the worst diet is Elizabeth.” I breathed a sigh of relief. But I wasn’t prepared for the following statement. “The student with the best diet is Uri.”

I had been singled out in another way. I was being commended for something I was criticized my entire life for, and I did not know how to process it. Perhaps I was doing something right with my diet. Starting that day, I embarked on a new journey to study the scientific evidence behind the health benefits of a vegan diet. Discovering the relationship between diet and heart health quickly became a passion, and I have worked every day to motivate others to make the same changes towards healthier dietary choices.

High blood pressure and salt sensitivity runs in my family. Forty years ago, my uncle had uncontrolled high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and recurrent bleeding ulcers. He was at high risk for a heart attack or even a stroke. Like much of my family, his diet largely consisted of meats, breads and rice. When I recommended that he focus on a plant-based diet, he and his wife looked at me as if I had told them to cut off his arm. Nonetheless, they decided to give it a try. Now, at 80 years old, my uncle no longer suffers from these conditions, and is now in excellent physical shape, with even a few marathons under his belt. I am proud I was able to take part in improving his health and quality of life. Unfortunately, I was not able to help some of my other family members in time.

I believe in the power of nutrition and exercise when it comes to cardiac care. In my 30 years of practice, I have witnessed countless patients take control of their cardiac health using diet and exercise. Not only does their heart health improve tremendously, but so does their overall wellbeing. They are able to reduce medications and their disease. Diet and exercise are two of the most powerful and effective, yet most under utilized treatment modalities within our society today. On behalf of The Cardiovascular Institute, my students, and most importantly, my patients, who are the crown jewels of my life, I am proud to present this book in the hope it will also impel you to start making changes towards better heart health today.

A Patient Story

The following is an excerpt from “Straight from the Heart” (Uri Ben-Zur, M.D., F.A.C.C.).

On August 2, 2008, I was playing basketball in Balboa Park with some friends, when I began to feel a little tired. I motioned to one of the other players to take my place on the basketball court and then sat down to rest.

The next thing I remember, I was at the hospital. Dr. Uri Ben-Zur met me there and told me I was having a heart attack. He performed an angiogram and inserted stents into my heart. I later found out that Dr. Ben-Zur was a distance away when he received the call, but somehow, he got to the hospital before the ambulance.

Little did I know that, at age 52, my life was about to change forever.

I thought I was a healthy man up to that point. I had no physical indication that anything was wrong with me. I played basketball several times a week, was pretty active—a little overweight, maybe, but that had never stopped me from playing ball with my friends. I felt pretty good.

Only, I wasn't fine. I discovered that I suffered from a 100% blockage in one of my arteries, which explained why my heart had given up on me in the park. Luckily for me, Dr. Robert Feinfeld, an ophthalmologist who happened to be on his way to see his son coach a basketball game, performed CPR, keeping me alive until paramedics arrived and rushed me to Providence Tarzana Medical Center.

I think my heart stopped working for about 15 minutes. I was very lucky to survive; I had a lot of angels around me that day. Chief of those angels was Dr. Ben-Zur, who performed the surgery that saved my life—but that's not all he did. He changed my outlook on everything I did. I don't drink anymore, I eat much healthier than I used to, and I exercise daily. On weekends I go on hikes up in the mountains for three to four hours. I have lost 40 pounds and have more energy than ever before, I feel like a new person...

...If something good can come from my heart attack, then this is it. Dr. Ben-Zur introduced me to a new way of life, and thanks to him, I feel much healthier and more energized than ever before. My wife and children would have had their lives changed forever if it weren't for Dr. Ben-Zur and the other angels that watched over me.

- Howard Abravanel



A Student's Path to Health

I want to preface this by saying that this is not a miraculous success story. I wish it was, but the truth is that this is my "work-in-progress" story.

Food has always been my weakness. My parents love to tell a story about me from my toddler days: my whole family was gathered in the synagogue for my uncle's wedding, which had started about 15 minutes prior, when I managed to wriggle my way out of my mother's grasp and took off speed-crawling down the aisle. My parents were frozen in horror. I was 10 seconds from reaching the altar when my grandmother in the front row managed to whip out a bag of M&M's and dangle them in front of me. At the first sight of the chocolate, I forgot all about reaching the altar and, instead, I made a beeline for the candy. Crisis averted. I laugh every time I think about that story, but the sad truth is that I have lived my entire life being captivated, distracted, and drawn towards unhealthy foods.

As I approached my teen years, I was always very active in sports, but I was never able to lose weight (or at least not for any meaningful and sustained period of time) because working out couldn't possibly compensate for my regular sessions of ice cream and cookie binge-eating. I obsessed over junk food. I would lie in bed and be unable to sleep because I was craving chocolate. I wish I were joking when I said that there were times that I would sleep with a pack of cookies in my bed, so that I could have them close by and ready to stuff in my mouth when I woke up in the middle of the night with another craving. It's awful—truly, truly awful—the amount of power I allowed food to have over me.

By the time I showed up for my first day of medical school, I had a BMI of 39.9. I was literally half a pound shy of being classified as morbidly obese at 23 years old. I would sit there in class and cringe as our professors would lecture to us about the importance of encouraging healthy lifestyles in our future patients because I could only imagine how hypocritical it would look to preach a healthy lifestyle when mine was so blatantly unhealthy. I had known for a long time that I needed to change, but realizing that I could potentially jeopardize an opportunity for my patients to invest in their health motivated me to commit to a new and healthier lifestyle.

I am not going to lie and say it was easy. It wasn't. I had several setbacks. One thing that I eventually realized was setting me up for failure was the idea that I could still eat my chocolate, cookies and ice cream as long as it was in moderation. I had to come to terms with the fact that, at least in my world, I don't have the self-control for moderation. And in retrospect, it makes sense. I had a true addiction to food, and you would never hear anyone tell an alcoholic to go ahead and have some wine as long as it's in moderation. I would try to limit myself to one cookie, and all it would do was torture me. That one cookie was such a tease. How could I possibly eat just one cookie when there were another 30 waiting for me in the package? Without fail, that one cookie quickly became the entire package, and then I would spend the next few days fighting the cravings and, more often than not, falling off the wagon again, so to speak. So, once I realized that eating tiny amounts of unhealthy food was harder for me than not eating it at all, it became much easier to make the decision to pass up on that one cookie or a small sliver of cake.



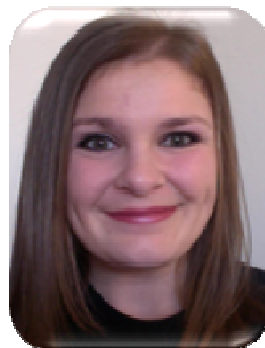
Another thing that I believe contributed to my success-in-progress has been reprogramming how I think about meals, especially meals out at restaurants. In my family, we always used to throw around the phrase “you don’t want to spoil your meal!” As in, we shouldn’t eat now because dinner is soon, and we don’t want to be full for dinner. To this day, my Dad (who, I might add, later had two massive heart attacks) will fast all day in preparation if we go to an all-you-can-eat buffet for dinner, to ensure that he gets his “money’s worth” of food. Now, if I’m going to go out to eat (which I try to avoid as much as possible, because it’s just better to avoid the temptation), I make sure to eat some bell peppers or a cucumber beforehand so that I’m not starving as I’m looking at the menu. Hungry Diana makes very poor decisions. Along the same lines, I stopped buying unhealthy snacks that masquerade as healthy snacks (for example, those 100 calorie packs—they’re a lot less healthy when you scarf down all 600 calories contained in those boxes in one sitting). Again, it comes down to me recognizing my limitations with my self-control and avoiding those situations. I also started paying attention to which foods cause me to be hungry five minutes later. Breads and cheese do nothing except make me hungrier, so I try to stay clear of them.

The biggest thing that has contributed to my success so far, however, has been how good I feel. The difference in my life has been incredible since I’ve stopped eating junk food. My energy has tripled, my mind is clearer, my memory is improved, I sleep better at night, and overall I feel so much better in my day-to-day life.

It has been 2 years since I started this journey. I have lost 75 pounds so far and am no longer classified as obese; however, I have another 20 pounds to go before my BMI is in the normal weight category. Although I can’t say that this entire process has been easy, I will say that the bulk of the weight loss was extremely easy once I started improving my diet. And that’s the amazing thing about the diet contained in these pages—you do not have to be 100% vegan to benefit from the information in this book. Obviously the more you can adhere to this diet, the better results you’ll have. But if you’re not willing to commit to a completely vegan lifestyle, that’s okay! I am not completely vegan either. At least not yet. It’s okay to start small. Based on my own personal experience with this, I believe that any amount of change that you are willing to commit to will have beneficial results for you. The most important thing is that you start doing something. Please remember that even the smallest step in the right direction is still *the right direction*.

I spent 15 or so years of my life trying to justify my poor eating habits, or making comments, such as “I know this is so bad for me, but it’s worth it. It’s so delicious.” I look back now, and I can’t believe I ever thought that way. I can’t believe I ever thought that a slice of cake was worth sacrificing my health for. There is no food that is worth dying for, having a heart attack for, or severely diminishing my quality of life for. It really is that simple.

- Diana Moers, OMS III



Story From A Loved One

"In June 2012 my husband developed chest pain. We went to the local emergency room, where a doctor told me my husband was having a major heart attack. A cardiologist had been called.

Fear and panic overwhelmed me. My husband was 47 years old at the time. We have three children. Thoughts began taking root in my head: What will happen to him, my life-long friend? What will be with our children?

Amazingly within minutes, a tall gentleman arrived. He said, "Hi my name is Dr. Ben-Zur, and I'll be taking care of your husband." He was obviously hurried and intensely focused on the problem, but his gentle eyes were calming. Within seconds I felt at ease. It was if an older brother had come to save us while we were drowning.

Almost immediately Dr. Ben-Zur rushed my husband to the operating room. This was at about 1:30 AM. At about 4:30 AM Dr. Ben-Zur emerged and came out to the waiting area. He had a glowing look, a big smile, and two thumbs up. His clothing was wet from perspiration. It was obvious that he had worked very hard. My husband was fine and he would be going home in a few days, he said.

My husband was then seen in Dr. Ben-Zur's office over the next several months. Dr. Ben-Zur and his amazing staff completely changed our lifestyle. My husband is now eating healthy food and is in the best shape he has been in for a very long time.

After meeting with many of Dr. Ben-Zur's patients, I realized that our story was not unique. Hundreds of them have similar ones.

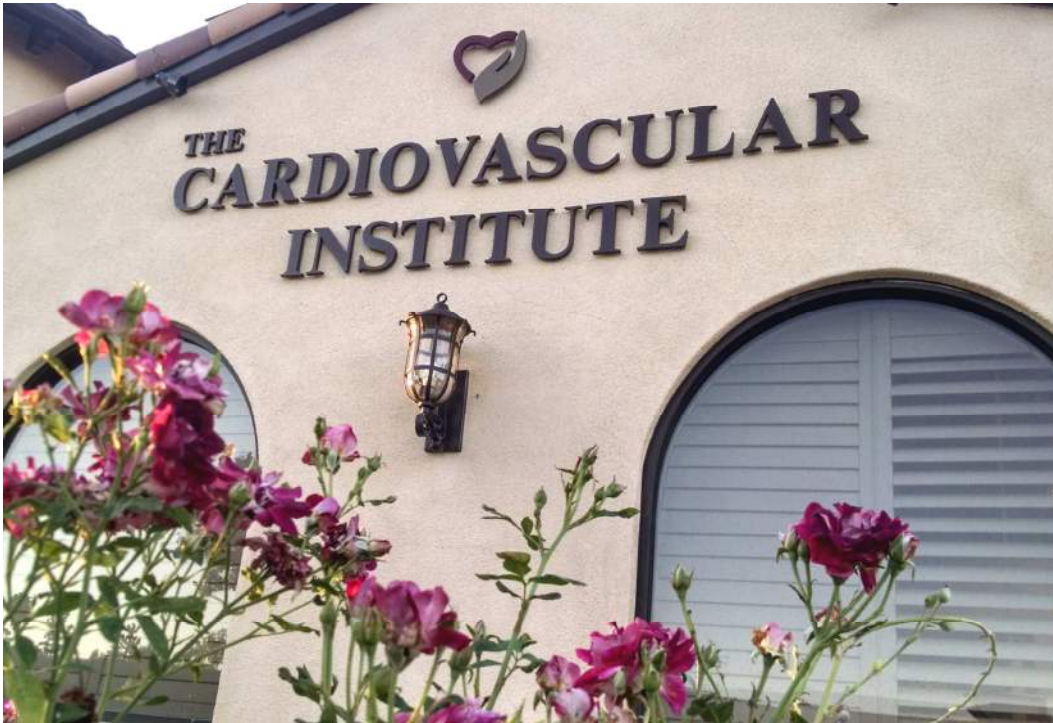
Dr. Ben-Zur has been a tremendous addition to our lives. My youngest son said it best: "Our doctor is special."



Even though I'm busy with my husband and raising three children, I take two cups of green juice to Dr. Ben-Zur every morning. (I worry that he does not always eat on time.)

My name is Azita and I look forward to meeting you at Dr. Ben-Zur's.

Azita Shalom



Ms. Shalom was nice enough to plant us roses so that every morning we are reminded of the new life we gave to her and her husband.

A Special Thank You to Dr. Ben-Zur

Through rotating with Dr. Ben-Zur we've not only expanded our knowledge on the science behind cardiology, but he's shown us the art of patient care. His dedication, compassion and commitment to each patient is inspirational.

In addition to molding us into future physicians and physician assistants, he influenced us to make healthy modifications in our personal lives. It was eye opening to watch the effect of diet and exercise on our patient's health. Many of the patients we followed were able to decrease their medications or discontinue them all together through exercise and a vegan lifestyle.

Being in an atmosphere that advocated for healthy diets and exercise has had profound effects on our lives. For some of us, it was the first time in our lives to eat vegetables on a daily basis. For others, we have adopted a complete vegan lifestyle and could not be happier. Some of us have even returned to the gym after years of no exercise, while others committed to increasing our exercise habits. Thank you, Dr. Ben-Zur, for shaping our futures in the field of medicine and for motivating us to reflect on our personal habits. You have inspired us to lead by example and to become role models for our patients.

From,
Your Students



Motivators for Change

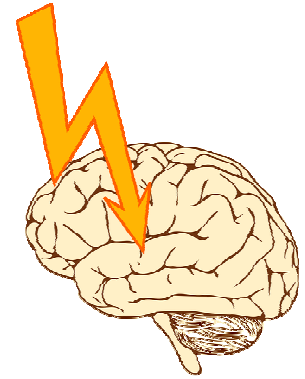
1. Let your head guide you, not your stomach.
2. As your body becomes cleared of junk food, it will desire it less and less of it.
3. When you look at junk food, remind yourself of the damage it can cause to your body.
4. Things will get easier with time—everyone goes through an adjustment period when starting a vegan diet.
5. Enjoying a healthy body for your entire life is much more satisfying than the taste of any junk food.
6. Once you have been on the vegan diet for some time, you will no longer miss the high-fat or high-sodium foods of your past!



Warning Signs of a...

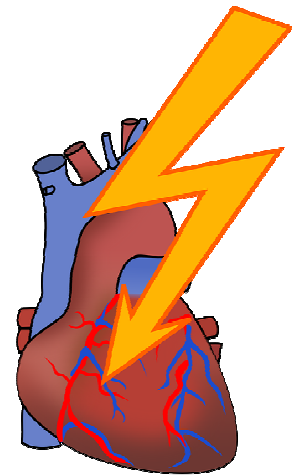
Stroke:

“Suddenly it felt like I was hit in the head. I started slurring my speech and I couldn’t move part of my face. One side of my body became weak and I had shooting pains.”



Heart Attack

“I experienced a tight squeezing chest pain. I could feel the pain radiating to my left arm. It was hard to move and breathe.”



Benzee the Heart says, “Avoid these serious conditions by eating a healthy diet and exercising!”

Benzee the Heart says, “Almost all of heart disease is preventable!”

Why is High Blood Pressure “Bad”?

High blood pressure, also known as “hypertension,” is increased pressure inside your arteries. This increased pressure in your arteries and veins causes your heart to work harder, even at rest, to supply blood through the rest of the body. This increased stress on the heart causes increased risk for heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and sudden death. Time and time again, lifestyle modifications have been proven to be the most powerful treatments before medication. Think of these changes as a "lifestyle prescription," and make every effort to comply with them. We will help too!

“

The doctor of the future will no longer treat the human frame with drugs, but will rather cure and prevent disease with nutrition.

–Thomas Edison

”

Lose the excuse!

Your health matters.

This is the only body you will have so take care of yourself. Learn to say no to foods that are killing you! Just because it is your best friend’s birthday, your sister’s wedding or your company picnic does not mean you have to eat anything and everything.

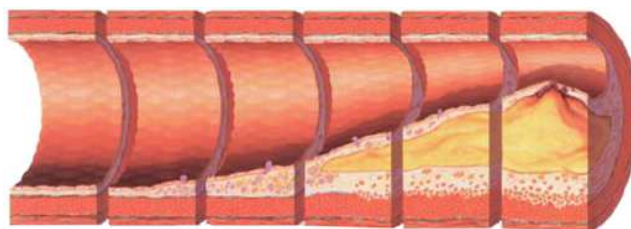
It is always a choice! You want to do this and you need to do this. Stop thinking and start doing!

We are here to help you succeed.



Don't Block the Pathway to the Heart

A key to having a healthy heart is making sure that the heart is receiving all of the nutrients and oxygen it needs to properly function. When the blood vessels that supply the heart become clogged with fat and cholesterol, the process of atherosclerosis is taking place. This process can result in damage to the heart leading to a heart attack and possibly death. Smoking and consumption of toxic chemicals only accelerates this process as it creates the initial damage that gives the fats a place to stick. Once the pathway to the heart is completely blocked, a heart attack occurs.

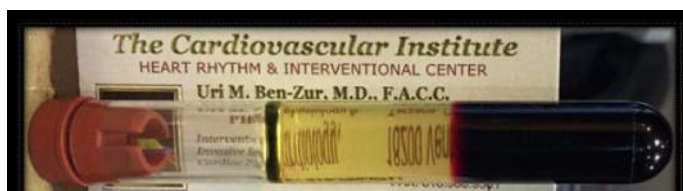


Limiting dietary consumption of saturated fats and cholesterol will help to prevent the “pipes” that provide the vital fluids to the heart from narrowing and clogging. At the same time, including a high fiber, plant based diet and moderate amounts of exercise will ensure the blood reaches its required destination.

All of the food that is eaten is absorbed and transported through the blood system. Imagine that after eating a diet consisting of foods high in fat and cholesterol such as cookies, ice cream and red meat, that all of the excess fat and cholesterol has created a cement-like sludge that is literally paving the remaining openings shut. The blood below is so full of fat and cholesterol that one cannot see through it: a heart attack in the making.

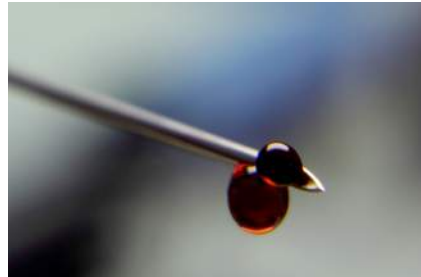
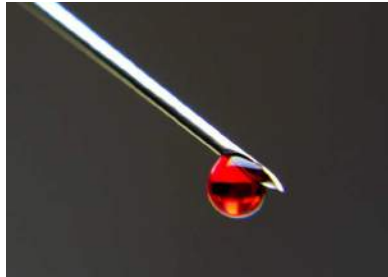


Through dietary and lifestyle changes, the thick greasy blood can be transformed to be free and clear from such harmful fats. By removing the unhealthy sweets and meats from the diet and living an active lifestyle, the life's source of vitality can flow unobstructed to provide the heart with the nutrition it needs, ensuring that it continues to beat strong for a long healthy future. Observe the change that is possible with a combination of diet and exercise as this patient's blood is now free from the excess fat, so that and the nutrients can reach the heart without blocking the way.



How Smoking Affects Your Blood Vessels

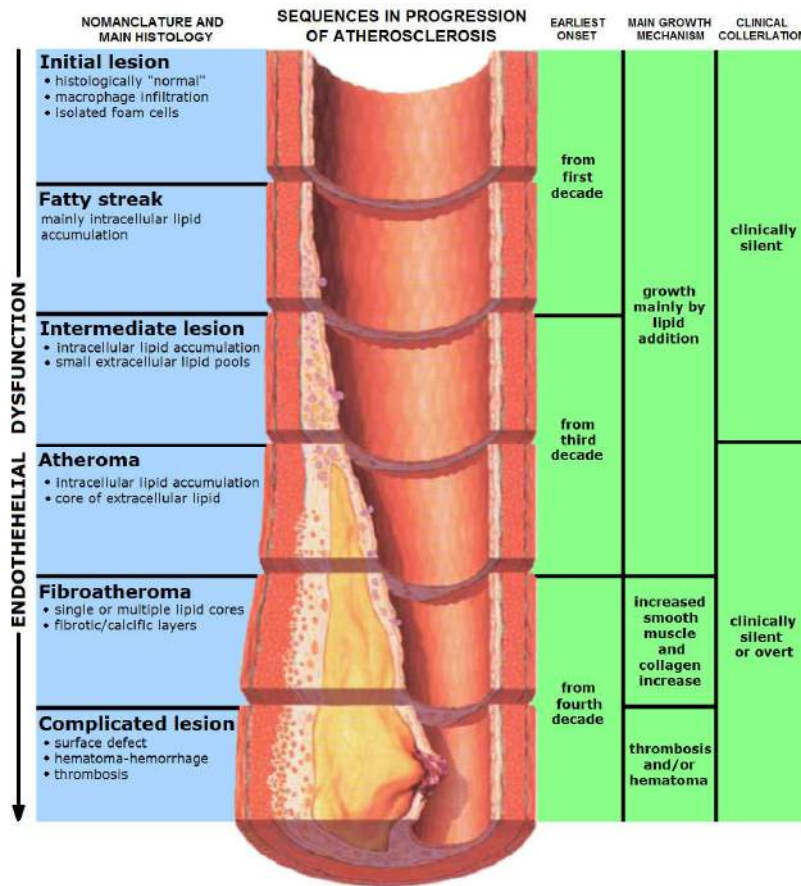
Everyone knows smoking can affect your lungs. However, did you know it can affect your blood's ability to carry oxygen?



Left = non-smoker's blood

Right = smoker's blood

The darker color means more waste products like carbon dioxide that build up due to smoking^f

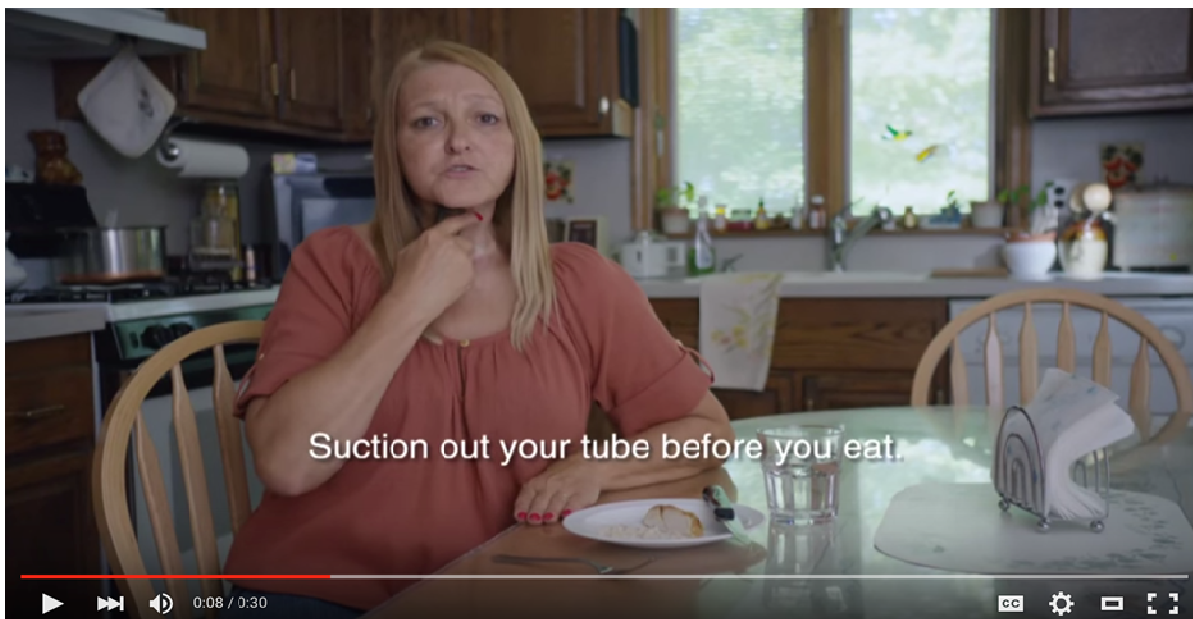


Smoking also increases your risk of developing high blood pressure and forming plaques that can block your blood flow as seen in the picture above.

Your Future in Smoking



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdmI35elnCQ>



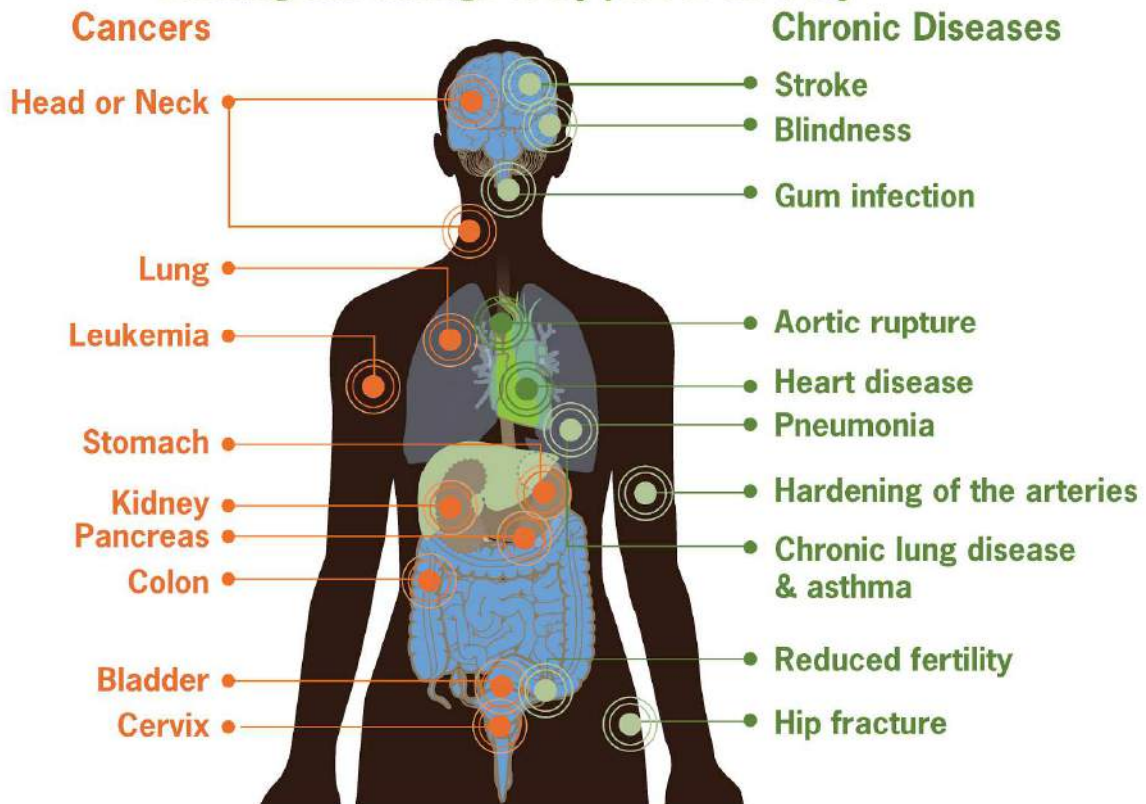
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEWky9PEroU>

It's never too late
to quit!...

...and start reversing some of the negative effects of smoking^g

Risks from Smoking

Smoking can damage every part of the body



Benzee the Heart says,
"Smoking stinks!"

Obesity Increases Cancer Risk

Inspired by the work of Dr. Richard Pietras, MD, PhD

Several mechanisms have been suggested to explain the association between obesity and cancerⁿ.

Most notable is the chronic low-level inflammatory state that obese patients are in. A body in an inflammatory state tries to regenerate new cells that are not inflamed. Being in a chronic state of inflammation puts the body at a higher risk of these continually regenerating cells becoming cancerous (cells that do not stop regenerating). Therefore, obese patients are at a higher risk of developing cancerⁿ.

Another issue is fat tissue makes hormones and growth factors that increase the growth of local cells, which can turn some into cancers. Therefore, the risk of many cancers increase as the body weight and amount of fatty tissue increases^s.

Additionally, cancer patients who are obese have a worse prognosis than those who are of a lower Body Mass Index (BMI)ⁿ.

According to The American Society of Clinical Oncology, obesity is quickly overtaking tobacco as the leading preventable cause of cancer^o.

Obesity is associated with an increased risk of cancer in many organsⁿ:

- Esophagus
- Pancreas
- Colon & Rectum
- Breast
- Endometrium
- Kidney
- Thyroid
- Gallbladder

Benzee the Heart says,
"OMG! Eating bad can
cause cancer too?!"

"Eat healthy, be nice
to me!!"

"You may be able to prevent
some cancers by eating healthy
and exercising!"

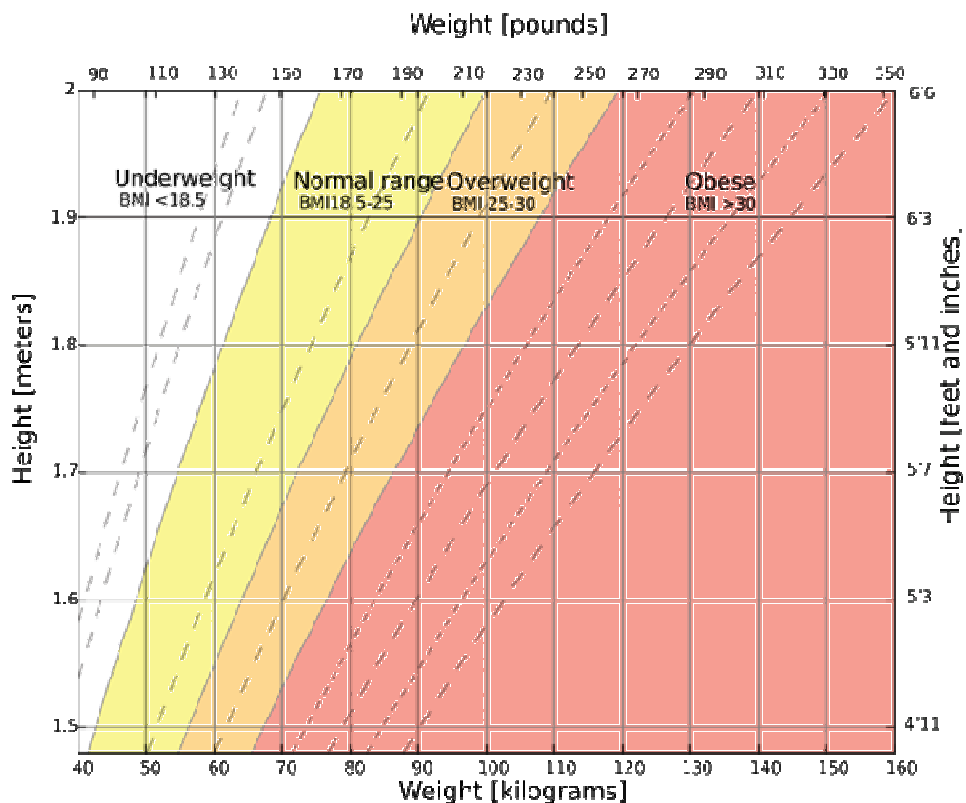


Body Mass Index

BMI is a person's weight in relationship to height and is a good measure to screen for obesity. A high BMI is strongly correlated with unhealthy levels of fat and various diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. If you have a high BMI following the diet and exercise outlined in this book will help bring you back to the healthy range and lower your chances of life-threatening diseases. Calculate your BMI here: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/adult_bmi/english_bmi_calculator/bmi_calculator.html

BMI Interpretation

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal or Healthy Weight
25.0-29.9	Overweight
30.0 - 34.9	Obese
35 and above	Morbidly Obese



Heart Disease Risk Calculator

You can calculate your 10-year risk of getting heart disease or a heart attack here: <http://drbenzur.com/patient-resources/heartrisk/>

Or through the American Heart Association. You just need to register for a free account at the following: https://www.heart.org/gg!Risk/main_en_US.html

1. GENDER
What is your **gender**?

2. AGE
What is your **age**? years
Enter a number between 20 and 79 into the box.

3. SMOKING
Are you a **smoker**?

Answer "Yes" if you have smoked cigarettes within the past month.

4. FAMILY HISTORY OF HEART DISEASE
Has anyone in your **immediate family** been diagnosed with **early heart disease**?

Immediate family is a blood-related parent, brother, sister or child.
Early heart disease is being diagnosed with heart disease before age 55 (for male relatives) or 65 (for female relatives).

5. EXISTING HEART OR BLOOD VESSEL DISEASE
Have you had any **atherosclerotic heart or blood vessel disease** events, conditions or procedures?

Answer "Yes" if you have had any of these:

- Transient ischemic attack (TIA)
- Angioplasty or balloon angioplasty
- Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG)
- Peripheral arterial disease
- Surgery for a circulation problem (legs)
- Carotid artery disease
- Stent procedure
- Heart attack
- Angina
- Stroke

6. DIABETES
Have you been diagnosed with **diabetes**?

Answer "Yes" if you have either type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

7. FASTING BLOOD SUGAR
Is your **fasting blood sugar** too high (100 mg/dL or higher)?

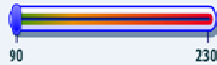
8. HEIGHT
What is your **height**? feet:
 inches

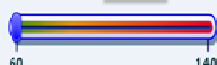
9. WEIGHT
What is your **weight**? pounds
Enter a number between 80 and 400 into the box.

After both your height and weight are entered, your Body Mass Index (BMI) will be calculated and displayed.

Your Body Mass Index (BMI) is: ##.# (category)

10. WAIST MEASUREMENT
Is your waist size **greater than 35 inches** (women) or **40 inches** (men)?

11. SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE
What is your **systolic blood pressure**? mm Hg

Type a number between 90 and 230 or adjust the slider.

12. DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE
What is your **diastolic blood pressure**? mm Hg

Type a number between 60 and 140 or adjust the slider.

13. TREATMENT FOR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
Are you currently being **treated for high blood pressure** with medicine prescribed by your doctor?

Why Should I Become Vegan?



The Positive Effects of A Vegan Lifestyle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cBDFmKagKos&feature=em-share_video_user



Dr. Joel Fuhrman: 3 Foods You Should Eat Every Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSUfgej-CF0>

Top Ten Positive Effects of a Vegan

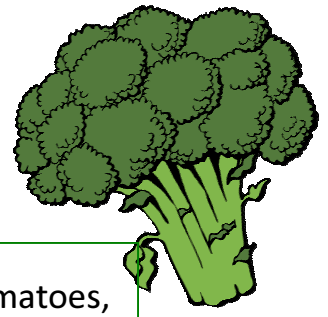
1. Avoids consuming LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, found in many meats
2. Dark, leafy greens are an excellent source of magnesium
3. Improved cardiovascular health from nuts and whole grains
4. Will always get adequate fiber intake
5. Will always get adequate vitamin C intake, an important antioxidant and booster of the immune system
6. Will automatically be on a low-salt diet
7. Lowers blood pressure
8. Improvement in migraine severity
9. Cost effective—meat and dairy products are typically more expensive than vegetables
10. Reduces carbon footprint, as raising animals for consumption

Benzee the Heart says, “In my opinion a vegan diet can prevent heart disease.”



Grade: **A+**

Lowest in bad stuff, highest in good stuff!



75%

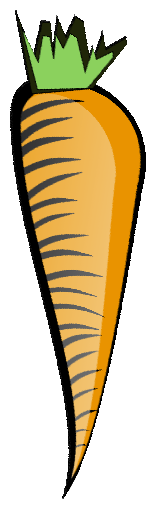
VEGETABLES

spinach, kale, lettuce, cucumber, beets, tomatoes, watercress, cabbage, celery, edamame, scallions, seaweed, onions, carrots, eggplant, mushrooms, bok choy, asparagus, arugula, corn, squashes, brussel sprouts, chard

15%

PROTEIN

tofu, quinoa, peas, chia seeds, edamame, black beans, white beans, kidney beans, chick peas, almonds, cashews, pistachios, lentils, sunflower seeds, hemp seeds, spirulina, plain soy milk



10%

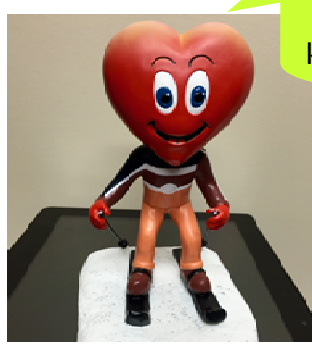
FRUITS

oranges, apples, kiwi, blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, figs, melon, grapefruit, pears

0%

AVOID

no red meat, no poultry, no pork, no fish
no sodium, no sugars
no fats, no oils, no dairy



Benzee the Heart says, "Did you know that spinach and kale are great sources of iron?"



Grade: **B+**

Overall healthy, but it could be better.



70%

VEGETABLES

spinach, kale, lettuce, cucumber, beets, tomatoes, watercress, cabbage, celery, edamame, scallions, seaweed, onions, carrots, eggplant, mushrooms, bok choy, asparagus, arugula, corn, squashes, brussel sprouts, chard

15%

PROTEIN

tofu, quinoa, peas, chia seeds, edamame, black beans, white beans, kidney beans, chick peas, almonds, cashews, pistachios, lentils, sunflower seeds, hemp seeds, spirulina, plain soy milk, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, egg whites

10%

FRUITS

oranges, bananas, grapes, apples, kiwi, blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, figs, melon, grapefruit, pears

5%

LOW

fish,
fats including avocados,
oils

0%

AVOID

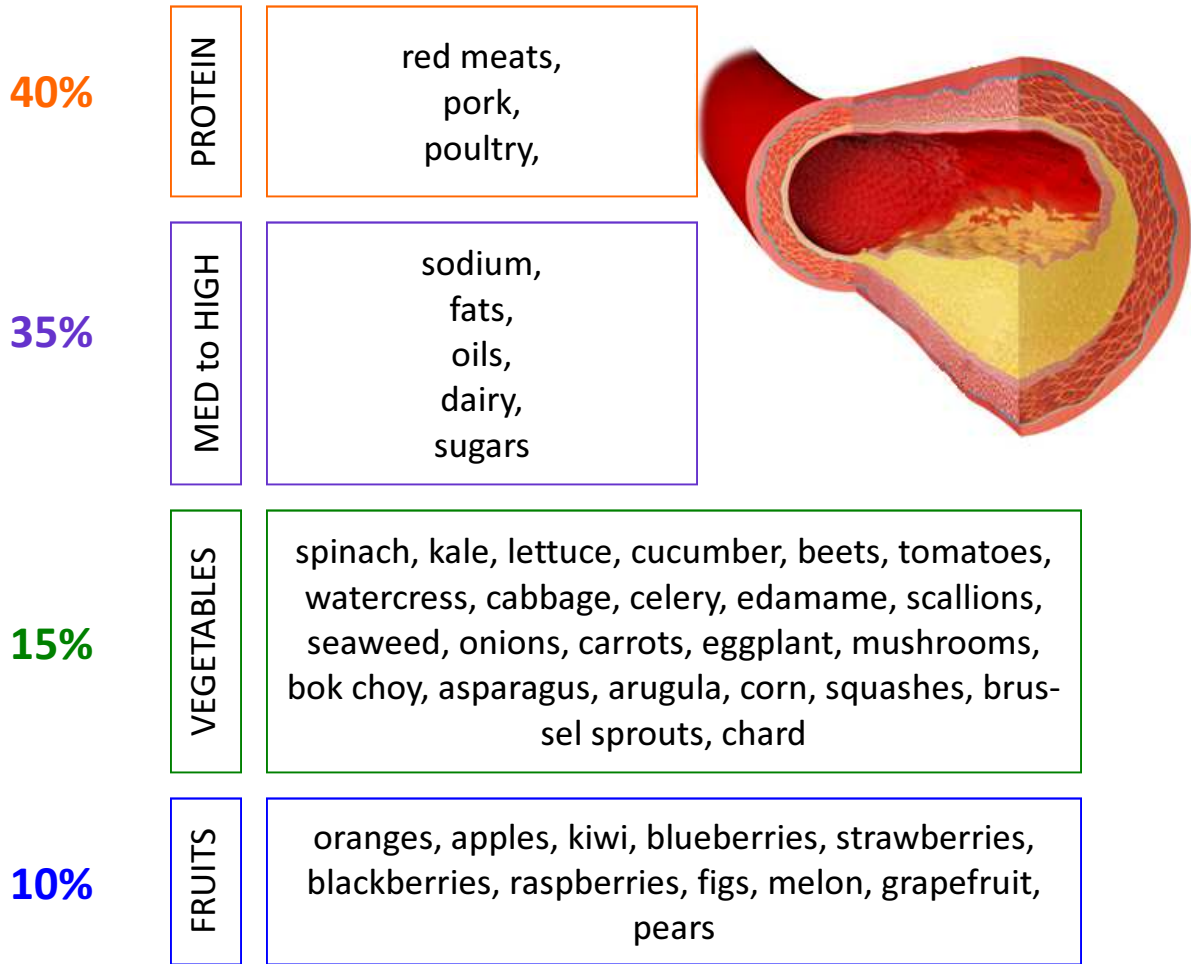
no red meat, no poultry, no pork
no sodium,
no sugars



Benzee the Heart says,
"Never tell yourself it's
too hard, the power to
change is in your head."



Grade: **F**
Needs improvement!

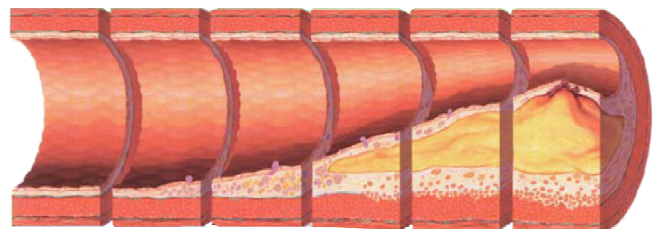


Grade: **F**
Needs improvement!

uncontrolled diet with high sodium, high fat, high sugar, and high red meat intake



Benzee the Heart says, "Watch out for corn products in protein bars!"



The Hidden Dangers of Eating Out

- Cannot control how food is prepared
- According to the FDA, patrons who regularly eat out at restaurants consume, on average, an extra:
 - 2.5 g of trans fat/day
 - 200 calories/day



- The USDA found that on average, lunch and dinner at a restaurant add an additional 156 and 144 calories, respectively (as opposed to the meal being made at home)^{b,c}
- Eating out is associated with a higher BMI^d
- Americans consume 1/3 of their diet from restaurants. Additionally the calories consumed at restaurants can cause more weight gain due to metabolic and hormonal reasons^f.

Benzee the Heart says, "If you do eat out, do it in moderation! Try dining out for one meal a week at a vegan restaurant."



Unsuspecting High Sodium Foods

Black bean burgers from the freezer section sound like a good vegan option, but some brands have upwards of 700mg of sodium per patty! This is nearly 1/3 of daily sodium intake.

Some more surprising high sodium foods:

- Tomato juice: 480mg sodium (20% of daily salt intake)
- ½ Cup of canned soup: 1,000mg of sodium – half of the recommended daily intake
- ½ Cup cottage cheese: 400mg of sodium.
- Ketchup, BBQ sauces, marinades and salad dressings can set you back 1,000mg of sodium in only a few tablespoons.



Tips: use fresh veggies to make your own soups, burger patties and smoothies. Look for “sodium free” or “low sodium” products instead of “reduced sodium” varieties. Instead of marinades use flavored vinegars and fresh lemon or lime juice, garlic and your favorite spices.

Debunking the Protein Myth

We live in a society in which we have been told more protein is better and the only sources of protein worthy of consumption come from meat and dairy.

Protein is an essential nutrient, absolutely critical not just in building and repairing muscle tissue, but in the maintenance of a wide array of important bodily functions. But does it really matter if our protein comes from plants rather than animals?

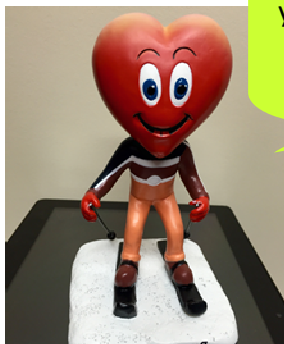
Protein is made up of twenty different amino acids. Our bodies are able to make eleven of them, but the other nine are ones we must consume from our food, the so-called “essential” amino acids. So it is not the protein, but actually these nine essential amino acids that we need .

The argument against plant proteins is that not all plant-based proteins are “complete,” meaning they do not contain all nine amino acids. However, a well-rounded whole plant-based diet can easily include all nine essential amino acids. A diet that rotates healthy plant-based protein sources like black, kidney and pinto beans, almonds, lentils, hemp seeds, spirulina, quinoa, spinach and broccoli will more than satisfy an individual’s protein needs. It does so without the saturated fat linked to heart disease.

Despite popular belief, more protein is not better; no scientific study has shown the benefits of protein consumption beyond the recommended 10-15 percent of daily calories. ^d

Still not convinced?

Consider this: some of the fiercest animals in the world are plant powered. The rhino, hippo, elephant, and gorilla all share one thing—they get 100% of their protein from plants. It’s time to ditch that steak, put away the cheese, and join us for a bowl of quinoa, lentils, and vegetables!



Benzee the Heart says, “Did you know that 1 cup of quinoa has 8 g of protein?”



The Clean Eating Revolution



Nature has provided an incredible bounty of food that contains every substance we could ever need to have healthy and active bodies. In the process of industrialization we have taken such perfect complete foods, stripped them of their valuable nutrients, and repackaged them to be sold as food that is, in reality, a toxic addictive substance.



Eating 'clean' means eating food in its most pure form. Clean food is free from antibiotics, preservatives, and added chemicals or flavors. It is free from the added salt which causes high blood pressure and free from added sugars which contribute to diabetes. It is minimally processed so that the vitamins, minerals, and fiber are present in their original form.



Once one begins to "eat clean," it is easy to become disgusted by the poor excuses for food that are sold in packages in vending machines, convenience stores, and fast food restaurants. These 'dirty' foods are high in the sugar and fat that are responsible for the high rates of diabetes and heart disease that we are seeing not only in our country, but increasingly world-wide, as our nation's fast food chains arise in previously healthy societies.

'Clean eating' at its essence is to love food for its natural state. It involves understanding where your food came from and how it was handled, from the time it was growing in the ground to the moment it meets your lips. Join the clean eating revolution. Try growing your own vegetables and herbs, buy fresh produce, visit your farmers market, consume whole grains, enjoy nuts and seeds, and choose foods in their most pure un-tampered form whenever possible. When you 'eat clean' from a variety of sources, you will find that a good diet and exercise will provide better health than a laundry list of medications ever could. Not only does 'clean food' taste better, fresher, and more satisfying, but it is part of a diet and lifestyle that will promote optimal heart health and total well-being.



NOTION
LOVE

All In or a Step at a Time?

For many who are living on one side of the extreme of a healthy diet, the best way to adopt healthier eating habits is to go all in. In this way, the full benefits of an all vegan diet may quickly reveal itself with weight loss and increased energy. By fully committing to a new diet, the new possibilities of health and vitality will quickly become clear.

Yet, for some this approach may seem too drastic and intimidating. Another option to quitting harmful foods is to take a stepwise approach. For some individuals, this is a more accessible and realistic way to achieve meaningful nutritional changes. Which route is taken is a personal option - akin to the decision of quitting cigarettes “cold-turkey” or slowly cutting back over time. Taking the stepwise approach might involve taking the first step to avoid eating meat during the week, while simultaneously including new vegetables and plant based protein in the diet. Here is a sample stepwise approach; talk to your doctor to create a plan that is best for you:

Example Plan:

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Cut out all red meat	Cut out unhealthy sweets and soda	Cut back on salt	Eliminate Dairy	Eliminate pre-made dressings
Increase plant based protein	Eat more fruits/vegetables and drink more water	Use more fresh herbs	Use unsweetened soy/almond milk	Use vinegar and/or lemon

Whatever approach is chosen, the important point is that one is honest with his/her own progress and is truly making strides in the right direction. It is important to constantly reassess where a current diet is and where it optimally could be. Falling back to bad habits is hard to avoid; having clear goals and a strong support network will help. Getting the entire family involved and stating one’s new lifestyle choice to friends and colleagues helps to build the needed support. The seeds for one’s new diet may be planted in the doctor’s office or in this book, but it is up to the individual to make sure that it grows more fully everyday. Remember, every single choice adds up to create a healthy heart and body. Whatever strategy is employed, one must stick with it in order to win.



Healthier Substitutions



flour



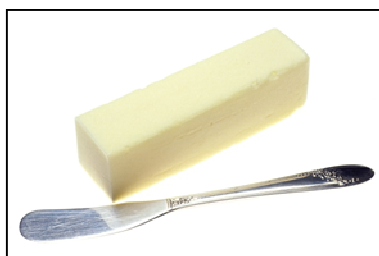
black beans



sugar



unsweetened applesauce



butter



olive oil



eggs



chia seeds

Healthier Substitutions



bread, pasta, rice



quinoa



pasta



zucchini ribbons



mashed potatoes



mashed cauliflower



tortilla



lettuce wraps

Healthier Substitutions



potato chips



kale chips



ice cream



frozen berries



croutons



nuts, seeds



Benzee the Heart says, "If you don't like quinoa, try almonds! It has the same amount of protein per cup!"

Healthier Substitutions



meats



tofu and tempeh



canned foods



fresh produce



fruit juice



real fruit smoothies



soda



water with a splash of
lemon, mint, or
cucumbers



Benzee the Heart says, "Did you know one can of Coca-Cola has 175 mg of sodium?"



Vegetables Low in Vitamin K to eat on a Warfarin (Coumadin) Diet



FOOD	SERVING SIZE	VITAMIN K CONTENT
Turnips (Raw or Cooked)	1 CUP	0.2µg (0% DV)
Beets (Raw or Cooked)	1 CUP	0.3µg (0% DV)
Onions (Raw or Cooked)	1 medium (331g)	1µg (1% DV)
Rutabagas (Raw or Cooked)	1 CUP	0.5µg (1% DV)
Pumpkin (Cooked)	1 CUP	2µg (2% DV)
Winter Squash, Butternut/Spaghetti (Cooked)	1 CUP	2µg (2% DV)
Summer Squash (Cooked)	1 CUP	3µg (4% DV)
Eggplants (Cooked)	1 CUP	3µg (4% DV)
Bamboo shoots (Raw or Cooked)	1 CUP	0µg (0% DV)
Portabella Mushrooms (Raw or Cooked)	1 CUP	0µg (0% DV)
White Mushrooms (Raw or Cooked)	1 CUP	0µg (0% DV)
Shiitake Mushrooms (Cooked)	1 CUP	0µg (0% DV)
Tomatoes (Raw)	1 CUP	14µg (18% DV)
Tomatoes (Cooked)	1 CUP	7µg (8% DV)
Cucumbers (Raw)	1 CUP	17µg (21% DV)
Iceberg Lettuce (Raw)	1 CUP shredded	17.4µg (22% DV)
Artichokes	1 medium	17.8µg (22% DV)

7 Day Meal Plan

Kick start your vegan lifestyle with this 7 day meal plan! Turn this into a 14 day meal plan by mixing and matching different meals to give yourself some variety. Save time by doubling a recipe to enjoy leftovers the next day!

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Day 1	Overnight Oats	Arugula Quinoa Salad	Power Bowl
Day 2	Yogurt Parfait	Zucchini Ribbon Salad	Tempeh Quinoa Salad
Day 3	Green Power Smoothie	Power Bowl	Cauliflower Rice Stir Fry
Day 4	Southwest Tofu Scramble	Chickpea Salad "Sandwich"	Spiced Lentil Stew
Day 5	Hot Oatmeal	Tofu Lettuce Wraps	Lemon Dill Tofu Steaks
Day 6	Overnight Oats	Black Bean & Kale Haystacks	Tempeh Quinoa Salad
Day 7	Southwest Tofu Scramble	The Quick & Easy Salad	Spiced Lentil Stew

Breakfast Recipes

Overnight Oats

Ingredients:

2T Chia Seeds
1/2C Rolled Oats
3/4C Unsweetened Almond or Coconut Milk
1/4t Pure Vanilla Extract
1/4t Cinnamon

Suggested Toppings:

1/4C Nuts and seeds
1/4C Fresh berries
A dash of cinnamon or cocoa powder
2T Unsweetened Coconut Flakes

Directions:

1. The night before, mix ingredients (except toppings) in a medium sized bowl. Cover and place in refrigerator overnight (or for at least 2 hours).
2. In the morning, the oats and chia seeds will soften for you to enjoy. Top with your favorite, healthy toppings!
3. Note: you can double or triple this recipe and have leftovers throughout the week. Save the toppings until you are ready to enjoy

Yogurt Parfait

Ingredients:

3/4C Plain, unsweetened, dairy-free yogurt (Coconut is a good option)
1/2C Blueberries (or pomegranate seeds)
1/4C Slivered almonds
1T Hemp heart seeds

Directions:

1. In a bowl or tall glass, layer a scoop of yogurt with berries and almonds and seeds. Continue layering until there are no more ingredients left.
2. Top parfait with a dash of cinnamon or cocoa and enjoy!

Green Power Smoothie

Ingredients:

1-2C Spinach and/or kale
1/2C Strawberries
1C Chopped cucumber
1/2C Chopped celery
2-3T Hemp hearts
A few mint leaves

Directions:

1. Add ingredients to a **blender** and blend until smooth (not a juicer)
2. Note: a splash or two of water may be necessary depending on how thick you prefer your smoothie



Hot Oatmeal

Ingredients:

1/2C Rolled Oats
1C Water or unsweetened Almond Milk
1T Flax Seed
1/4t Pure Vanilla Extract
1/4t Cinnamon

Suggested Toppings:

1/4C Nuts and seeds
1/4C Fresh berries
A dash of cinnamon or cocoa powder
2T Unsweetened Coconut Flakes
2T Peanut Butter (all natural, no added ingredients—just peanuts!)

Directions:

1. Heat water/almond milk in a saucepan. Add oats, flax seed, cinnamon and vanilla and cook until desired consistency.
2. Top with any of the suggested toppings or enjoy plain!



Southwest Tofu Scramble

Ingredients:

1 Package Non-GMO Extra firm tofu, drained and crumbled
1 Bell pepper sliced
1/4 Onion sliced
2C Kale chopped

Seasonings:

1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp cumin powder
1/4 tsp chili powder
1/4 tsp turmeric

Directions:

1. Sauté peppers, onions and kale in a medium saucepan with non-stick olive oil spray until soft
2. In a small bowl, add seasonings with about 1-2 tablespoons of water (enough to make a sauce consistency).
3. Once tofu has been drained and patted down, crumble and add to the veggie pan. Sauté with the veggies for a few minutes and then add the sauce. Stir until tofu is slightly browned
4. This makes 4 servings and will keep well in the refrigerator for leftovers. You may top with 1/4 avocado or a dollop of dairy-free yogurt.

Lunch Recipes

Arugula Quinoa Salad (2 Servings)

Ingredients:

4C Arugula
1C Cooked quinoa, cooled
1 Tomato, chopped
1C Cucumber, chopped
Juice & zest from 1 lemon
1/4C Olive oil
1/2C Slivered almonds or walnuts
1-2T pomegranate seeds

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, mix arugula, quinoa, tomato and cucumber. Dress with lemon juice, lemon zest and olive oil
2. Top with pomegranate seeds and almonds or walnuts and enjoy!

Zucchini Ribbon Salad (2 Servings)

Ingredients:

4 cups spinach or arugula
1 small zucchini
2/3 cup pecan halves
1/3 cup unsalted salted, roasted sunflower seeds
Juice from 1 lemon
2 Tbsp freshly grated orange zest
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil



Directions:

1. To make zucchini ribbons, shave zucchini using a vegetable peeler.
2. Add spinach to a large bowl and top with ribbons.
3. Sprinkle with pecans and sunflower seeds.
4. Squeeze lemon over salad. Sprinkle with zest and drizzle with olive oil.
5. Add ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth and enjoy!

Chickpea Salad “Sandwich”

Ingredients:

2 Leaves of butter lettuce (or romaine)
1 Can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1C Celery, chopped fine
3 green onions, thinly sliced
1/4C finely chopped red bell pepper
3T Non-dairy yogurt, plain
1 Clove garlic, minced
1 1/2t yellow mustard
2t fresh dill, minced
Juice from 1/2 lemon
Ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Mash the chickpeas with a fork or potato masher in a large bowl.
2. Add the remaining ingredients, except the lettuce, and stir to combine
3. Top each lettuce leaf with 1/2 cup of chickpea salad and enjoy!

Asian Tofu Lettuce Wraps (2-4 Servings)

Ingredients:

2t olive oil
1 Medium onion, chopped
1T fresh ginger, minced
1T lemongrass, minced
2 Cloves garlic, minced
1 Package Non-GMO extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled
2 Tbs. Bragg liquid aminos
2 Tbs. hoisin sauce
1-2t low sodium chile sauce
4 Butter lettuce or iceberg lettuce leaves

Toppings:

1 large carrot, grated
1/2 C bean sprouts
1/2C edamame
1 Green onion, chopped
½ cup fresh mint, chopped
½ cup peanuts, finely chopped
Sprinkle of red pepper flakes

Directions:

1. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, ginger, lemongrass, and garlic, and cook until onions are soft, about 5-10 minutes.
2. Add tofu and cook 5 minutes, or until heated through. Stir in soy sauce, hoisin sauce, and chile sauce.
3. Add a scoop of the tofu mixture to each lettuce leaf. Top with carrots, sprouts, edamame, green onions, peanuts, mint and red pepper flakes. Enjoy!

Lunch Recipes

Black Bean & Kale Haystacks (3 Servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 Can low sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1C Cooked quinoa
- 2C Kale, chopped
- 1T Olive oil
- 1/2 Onion, diced
- 2 Cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tomato, chopped
- 1 Avocado sliced
- 2 Green onions, chopped
- 3T Non dairy, unsweetened plain yogurt
- 3T low sodium salsa
- 1 Head of romaine lettuce, shredded
- Juice from 1 lime

Directions:

1. Sauté onion and garlic in a saucepan with olive oil for 5 minutes. Add black beans and kale and stir until heated through. Remove from heat.
2. On the bottom of the plate add a scoop of quinoa. Top with black bean and kale mixture. Stack on a big handful of lettuce. Top with tomatoes, green onions, avocado, salsa and yogurt.
3. Squeeze a wedge of lime over your haystack and enjoy!

The Quick & Easy Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 Head of romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1 Tomato, chopped
- 1/2C Cucumber, chopped
- 1/4 Red onion, sliced thin
- 1 Carrot, peeled and grated
- 1/2C Low sodium chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- Juice & zest from 1/2 lemon
- Drizzle of olive oil (1-2t)

Directions:

1. Combine ingredients in a big bowl. Top with lemon juice, zest and a drizzle of olive oil. Enjoy!



Note: Lunch salads can easily be packed for busy work days. Toss your ingredients in a container, leaving the lemon juice/olive oil on the side. Dress the salad when you are ready to eat. Leftover dinners heat well for quick lunch options! The green power smoothie can be made into a more filling lunch option by adding 1/2 cup rolled oats. Blend until smooth and enjoy its heart healthy effects!



Benzee the Heart says, "It's not just a diet, it's a lifestyle!"

"I can't believe the best dietary advice I ever got as a child was from Popeye!"

Dinner Recipes

Power Bowl (2-3 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 Large sweet potato, chopped into small cubes
- 1 (15oz) can of low sodium chickpeas, drained, rinsed and dry
- 2C cooked quinoa (1C dry, cooked in water)
- 1 large carrot, julienned
- 1 small head purple cabbage, shredded
- 3 cups arugula (or other greens like spinach or kale)
- 1-2T hummus per power bowl
- 1-2T hemp seeds per bowl

Seasonings:

1/4t each: garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, cumin, cayenne

Directions:

1. Roast the sweet potato and chickpeas. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Spread out the chopped sweet potato on one sheet and drizzle with 1/2T olive oil. Toss with black pepper.
3. In a bowl, combine the dry chickpeas with 1/2T olive oil and seasonings. Spread out evenly on the other sheet.
4. Place the sweet potatoes and chickpeas in the 400°F oven and roast for 15 minutes, then flip the sweet potatoes and roll around the chickpeas. Roast for another 15 minutes. The potatoes will be done when they are fork tender and lightly browned. The chickpeas are ready when they are golden. Be careful not to burn them.
5. Cook the quinoa according to package directions (usually 1.5-2 cups water to every 1 cup of quinoa). When the quinoa, sweet potatoes and chickpeas are done, you can assemble the bowl.
6. For assembly: add a cup of greens to the bottom of your bowl. Top with ½ cup sweet potatoes, ½ cup cooked quinoa, shredded vegetables, hemp seeds and hummus. Serve as is or squeeze a wedge of lime over the top. Enjoy!

Tempeh Quinoa Salad (4 servings)

Ingredients:

- 2C Cooked quinoa (1cup dried, cooked in water)
- 1 8oz package of tempeh, diced into bite-sized pieces
- 1T Olive oil
- ½ Onion, chopped
- 1 Bell pepper, chopped
- ½ C Cherry tomatoes, halved
- Juice from 1 lime
- 1 can of low sodium organic black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2T fresh cilantro
- 1 Avocado, diced

Seasonings:

- 1t cumin
- 1/4t each: cayenne pepper, chili powder, garlic powder, black pepper

Directions:

1. While the quinoa cooks, prepare the tempeh: heat olive oil in a skillet on medium heat and add onions. Cook until soft (about 5 minutes)
2. Add the bell pepper, tempeh, lime juice and seasonings and cook the mixture for about 15 minutes (stirring occasionally)
3. Pour the cooked quinoa and tempeh mixture into a bowl and add the black beans, cilantro and tomatoes
4. Serve with sliced avocado, a dollop of non-dairy yogurt or hummus

Cauliflower Rice Stir Fry (Makes 2 Servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 large head of cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 red onion sliced (separated into 2 piles)
- 4 cloves garlic minced (separated into 2 piles)
- 1T fresh ginger, minced
- 1 small red chili, thinly sliced
- 2C fresh broccoli florets
- 1 Carrot, sliced thin
- 3 Cups fresh spinach
- ½ Bell pepper sliced
- Juice from ½ lemon
- 1/2C edamame
- 2T shelled pumpkin seeds & fresh cilantro



Directions:

1. Place cauliflower in food processor and pulse until finely chopped
2. Heat 1T olive oil in a large pan on medium heat. Add ½ of the onions and garlic to the pan and sauté for 5 minutes.
3. Add cauliflower to the pan along with 1/4 cup of water. Steam the mixture for about 6 minutes, or until the water has evaporated and cauliflower is tender. Transfer to a bowl and cover to keep warm.
4. Sauté the remaining garlic and onions until tender. Add the ginger and chili and cook another minute. Add the broccoli, carrot, bell pepper to the pan and cook 5 minutes or until tender. Turn off the heat and add the spinach and lemon juice, stirring to combine. For each serving, top cauliflower with vegetables and garnish with edamame, pumpkin seeds and cilantro.

Dinner Recipes

Spiced Lentil Stew over Quinoa (6 servings)

Ingredients:

Quinoa:

- 1 cup dried quinoa
- 2 cups of water
- 2 carrots, peeled & diced
- 1 can of low sodium black beans, rinsed & drained

Lentils:

- 1T olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 4 tomatoes, chopped
- 1C dried green lentils
- 1 quart low sodium vegetable broth
- 6 stalks of celery, chopped
- 4 carrots, peeled & diced
- 1/4t ground coriander
- 1/4t ground cumin
- 1/4t black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in a pan and sauté onions and garlic for 5 minutes. Then add the tomatoes, lentils, celery, carrots, vegetable broth and spices. Cover and cook on medium heat for 1 hour or until the lentils are soft.
2. While the lentils cook, make the quinoa. Add dry quinoa and 2 cups of water to a pot and heat on high. Once it comes to a boil lower heat to a simmer and cook. After 10 minutes, add beans and carrots and cook for another 10-15 minutes or until the quinoa is cooked.

Lemon Dill Tofu Steaks (3 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 package Non-GMO extra firm tofu
- Non-stick olive oil spray

Dressing:

- 1 clove of garlic
- Juice from 2 lemons
- 1T tahini
- 1T water
- 1t extra virgin olive oil
- 3/4C fresh dill (stems removed)
- Black pepper

Directions:

1. Rinse the tofu and wrap in a few paper towels. Place a heavy object (like a saucepan) on top of the tofu for 25 minutes to remove the moisture.
2. While the tofu is straining, make the lemon dill sauce. Add all dressing ingredients to a food processor and pulse until well incorporated.
3. When the tofu is ready, slice into four large steaks. Heat a skillet over high heat and add non-stick spray to the pan and add the tofu. Let brown on one side for 6 minutes and then flip. Reduce heat if necessary to avoid burning.
4. When tofu is golden on each side, transfer to a bowl and pour on the dressing, stirring to coat.
5. Serve immediately with steamed vegetables and/or quinoa.

Remember, the key to having a heart-healthy lifestyle is consistency! We do not expect these changes over night, but with a few changes every day that stay consistent, your heart will surely reap the benefits!



Healthy Snacks

Feeling hungry and low in blood sugar between meals? A good place to start is making sure you are eating complete meals, especially a good breakfast with long lasting energy provided from whole grains and/or nuts and seeds. If you still find yourself craving a quick bite, here are some healthy snacking suggestions:

Carrots/Celery/Peanut Butter:

A Classic. Try almond butter as a healthier alternative to peanut butter.



Hummus/Pita:

Hummus is high in protein, beware of high salt content. Try making your own with chick peas, tahini, lemon, and garlic all blended together. Whole grain pita is recommended.



Piece of Fruit: Apple/Orange/Banana:

Fruit is a great source of fiber and vitamins, but it is high in sugar, so keep that in mind. A piece of fruit before meals is a good way to help avoid over eating.



Nuts/Seeds/Trail Mix:

The best trail mixes are free from sugary yogurt bites and chocolate. Beware of the high calorie content and to not overdue consumption. Try to mix your own.



Edamame:

Not just for the Japanese restaurant. Great high protein snack idea. Avoid salted edamame



Other Ideas: Broccoli, Bell Pepper, Jicama

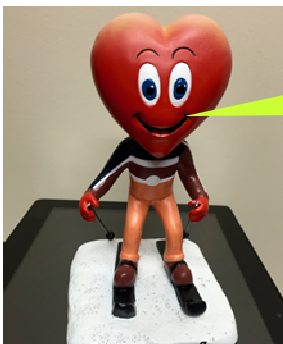
Are you over caffeinated?

For many, a morning coffee is an essential part of starting the day. But what are the effects of coffee on your health? Large amounts of caffeine may be detrimental to the heart.



Caffeine may precipitate palpitations, or irregular heartbeats. If you are experiencing palpitations, it is best to stop caffeine ingestion altogether.

Tea is an excellent alternative to coffee. It is high in antioxidants which can protect against atherosclerosis. Drink herbal teas that are free of caffeine for the optimal effect in relaxation and heart health. Mint tea or any other variety is a great drink to enjoy.



Benzee the Heart says, "If you are tired, try getting to bed earlier. Caffeine is no substitute for a good nights sleep"

Sleep

Sleeping difficulty is very common, especially with aging. Poor sleep can cause numerous negative effects including poor concentration, forgetfulness, irritability, daytime fatigue, anxiety, and depression, and poor sleep has been proven to lead to cardiovascular disease. While there are several types of medications that exist for sleep, in many cases medication actually disturbs the sleep cycle and can make a patient's insomnia worse in the long run. So what can you do to improve your nightly sleep? The answer is to improve sleep hygiene by taking the following steps:

- The bed is only for sleep– avoid eating and watching TV in bed.
- Sleep only long enough to feel rested.
- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day; routine is very important.
- Do not try to force yourself to sleep. If you can't sleep, get out of bed and try again later.
- Have coffee, tea, and other foods that have caffeine only in the morning.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Avoid heavy late night meals.
- Avoid smoking, especially in the evening.
- Keep your bedroom dark, cool, quiet, and free of reminders of work or other things that cause you stress.
- Solve problems you have before you go to bed.
- Exercise several days a week, but not right before bed.
- Avoid looking at phones or reading devices (“e-books”) that give off light before bed. This can make it harder to fall asleep. Regular books are okay.




Benzee the Heart says, “If you experience a banging head, irritability, change in speech, loss of strength, or sudden pain, see a doctor immediately as these are possible signs of a stroke!



Top Ten Reasons to Exercise

1. Strengthens your heart, allowing it to pump efficiently
2. Decreases oxygen demands on the heart
3. Decreases blood sugar
4. Decreases body mass
5. Decreases need for medications
6. Improves sleep
7. Reduces stress and tension
8. Reduces anxiety and depression
9. Increases one's self-confidence and wellbeing
10. Allows for opportunities to socialize (e.g., joining the office softball team)



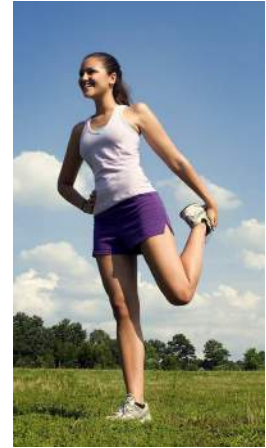
Benzee the Heart says, "It takes just a few hours for food to travel from your mouth and be absorbed into your bloodstream!!"



Benzee the Heart says, "If you experience sudden chest pain or shortness of breath, see a doctor immediately as this can be sign of a heart attack!"

How to Get Started

- Tailor an exercise program that works for you. You may need to get a professional trainer in order to do this.
- Everyone's body is unique and has been through different experiences. What may work well for a 25-year-old (e.g., weight training) might not work well for an 80-year-old.
- Regardless of age, start slowly, making sure that you are exercising with the correct techniques.
- Reduce your risk of injury—if you have bad knees, then try water sports; if you have never lifted weights before, then work with a trainer; if you know you get short of breath while walking uphill, then walk on a flat surface.
- Be adventurous! Try planning a vacation in the great outdoors.
- Listen to music while you workout.
- Don't be afraid to go outside of your comfort zone—try paddleboarding, pilates, yoga, etc.



Before beginning any exercise program, remember you must get medical clearance from Dr. Ben-Zur or your physician!

More Tips On How To Get Moving

1. Join a walking group in your neighborhood or local shopping mall.
2. Get the whole family involved — enjoy an afternoon bike ride or nature hike with your kids.
3. Walk the dog — don't just watch the dog walk.
4. Clean the house or wash the car.
5. Do stretches, exercises, or stationary bike while watching television.
6. Plant and care for a vegetable or flower garden.
7. Exercise to a workout video.
8. Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way to your workplace.
9. Use stairs instead of the elevator or intentionally park further away from the entrance.
10. Replace a coffee break with a brisk 10-minute walk. Ask a friend to go with you.



Benzee the Heart says, "The little things add up, try to add in exercise throughout your entire day."

The F.I.T.T. Principles for Heart Health

The **Frequency Intensity Time Type Principle** is a set of guidelines to help you get started with a workout routine that “FITTs” your goals and current fitness level.

	Aerobic Exercise	Strength Training	Flexibility
Frequency	EVERY DAY	2-3 nonconsecutive days per week	3-5 days per week
Intensity	Exercise at 60-80% of maximum heart rate	Train at your maximum capability	Stretch 15-45 secs per movement
Time	30-60 minutes per day	60 minutes per day	60 minutes per day
Type	Any activity that maintains target heart rate (i.e. running, walking, swimming, cycling, sports, etc.)	Resistance exercise (i.e. bands, dumbbells, bodyweight, etc.)	Stretching exercise (i.e. yoga, Tai’Chi, Pilates, etc.)

i, j

***REMEMBER:**

Maximum Heart Rate = 220 – (your age)

Target Heart Rate = 60% to 80% of maximum heart rate

Exercise Precautions:

- STOP if you become overly fatigued or short of breath; discuss the symptoms with your doctor.
- STOP if you develop a rapid or irregular heartbeat or have heart palpitations. Check your pulse after you have rested for 15 minutes. If it’s above 120 beats per minute at rest, call your doctor.
- STOP if you experience chest pain and visit your doctor.



Benzee the Heart says, “Did you know exercise is one of the best ways to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) while raising your HDL (good cholesterol)?”

“

Exercise should be regarded as tribute to the heart.

–Gene Tunney

”

Lose the Excuse!

The most popular day to exercise is tomorrow.

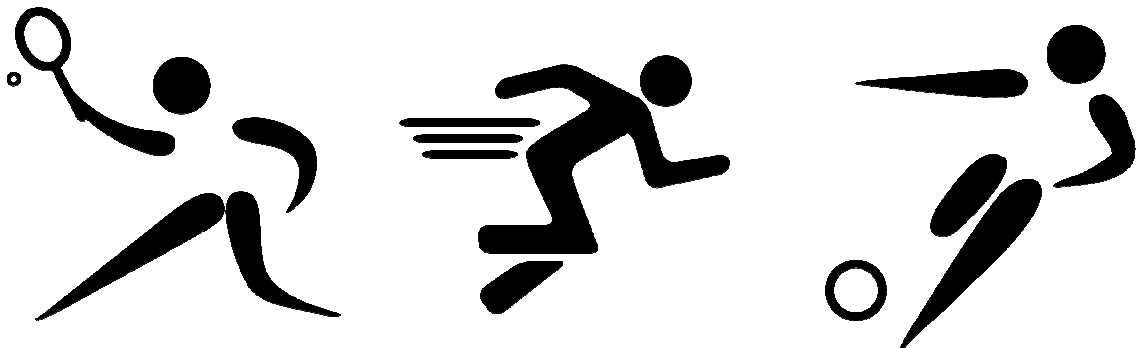
For most people, the hardest part of exercising is just getting started. Hectic schedules and lack of time certainly contribute to the excuses. But for many people, lack of basic workout knowledge intimidates them and prevents them from even getting started.

“

Those who think they don't have time for exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness.

–Edward Stanley

”



Wellness Tip for Seniors: Improving Balance

Falls are a big deal! Here are the statistics: one in every three adults over the age of 65 will fall and get taken to the Emergency Room, and the adults who develop fractures have a very high mortality rate! There are many exercises and routines that one can do on a daily basis to improve strength and balance , and reduce the risk for falls. Here are some examples:

Exercise 1: Simple Leg raise

Stand behind a stable chair just in case you need to hold it for balance

1. Place left hand on back of chair.
2. Place right hand on your right hip or on chair for more balance and lift right leg up (bending at the knee and slightly at the hip)
3. Place right foot back on the floor and repeat.
4. Repeat leg raise for 15 repetitions.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the other leg (try to repeat 3 times on each side)



Exercise 2: Heel-to-toe walking

1. Plant left leg on the floor and lift right leg.
2. Walk forward placing the heel of the right leg so it touches the toes of the left foot.
3. Take next step by lifting left leg and placing left heel so it touches the toes of the right foot.
4. Repeat for 10-20 steps



Exercise 3: Side leg raise

1. Place both hands on a sturdy non-mobile chair for balance.
2. Stand with legs shoulder width apart and keep back and body in straight line.
3. Lift left leg laterally to the side to achieve a 30 degree angle between legs then place leg back on ground.
4. Repeat 10-20 times with one leg and then switch legs.
5. Try to complete 2 sets of leg raises in each leg.



Exercise 4: The Tippy Toe

1. Place both hands on a sturdy non-mobile chair for balance.
2. Stand with both legs shoulder width apart.
3. Lift heels to stand in the tippy toe stance in both legs and hold to 1-2 seconds.
4. Lower heels to the ground and repeat 10-20 times.



REMEMBER: If you have a medical condition, make sure it is okay with your physician to start exercising.

Healthy Eating for Kids



Kids, remember, what you eat is important! Eat to live. Don't live to eat. Food is energy and helps you grow big and strong. Let's follow these quick healthy tips for a healthier, happier, and better you!



Benzee the Heart says,
"Start kids young, and
have some fun!"

"Kids learn from
watching you. Eat
fruits and vegetables
and your kids will
too!"



Meet our Animated Staff

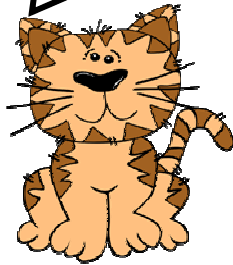


"Only you can prevent heart disease!"



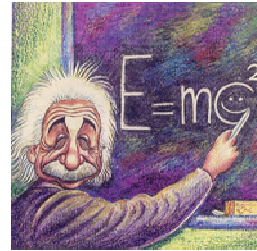
Rami the Bear

"Let's fight for your health."



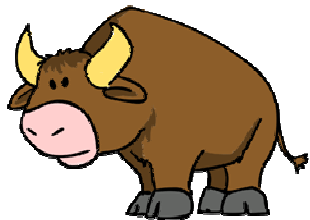
Martha
Queen of the Jungle

"Good thoughts breed good thoughts."



Bhagat the Brain

"A broccoli a day keeps heart disease away."



Baby Bull Marissa

"I'm sweeter than sugar."



Sweet Pea
Mariana

"Don't be a bore. Laugh more."



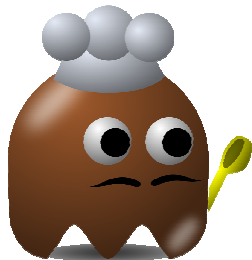
Laughing
Leslie

"I want you to keep your blood clean."



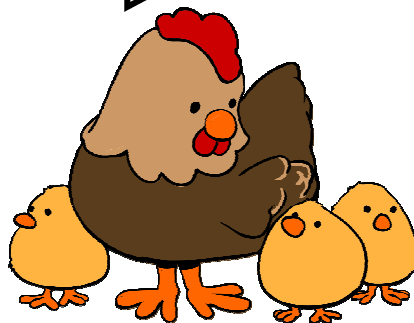
Countess
Blanca

"Mind over batter."



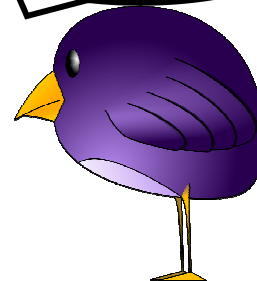
Chef Liora

"Halt the salt."



Momma Elizabeth

"Share your success with family and friends."



Birdie Lanna

Just Remember

The Cure



Or

The Band-Aid



Which do you prefer?



Benzee the Heart says,
"Junk food may taste good
for a few seconds, but you
live with the effects on
your body 24/7."

"6.4 million children have been diagnosed
with ADHD; more than 2/3 of them are taking
Ritalin for school. What does that say about
our school system? "

Cases of the Cardiovascular Institute

As an advocate for lifestyle optimization, I have seen that for many patients, changes are often not made until the heart disease has progressed to a life threatening level. My hope is that through sharing these patients' stories, that others may learn and avoid the need to put their own lives on the line, to take the message to heart. It is my great privilege and joy in life to practice medicine and bring health to my patients. Yet through my years of training and experience, I have come to realize the limitations of our medical tool box. I have come to see time and time again, that the lasting life changing improvements I've helped to bring to patients lives' were achieved through diet and exercise.

Case#1-"Hold onto your heart "

I was a person who considered French fries my daily vegetable intake. I figured if it can't run or fly and be doused with BBQ sauce, it wasn't worth eating. My exercise consisted of picking up the remote control from the counter and sitting back down on the couch to watch TV. My high intake, low output lifestyle, was taking its toll on my heart. I began to experience shortness of breath with any activity over 10 minutes, I was waking up from sleep with a cough at night, I was feeling occasional chest pains, and I noticed increased swelling in my legs. These were all signs that my heart was not pumping well, also known as congestive heart failure.

After years of doctors visits and medications, my heart was so diseased, that the only possible solution would be a heart transplant. It was a dangerous procedure with long-term complications. However, it was the only way to save my life. Yet there was one problem. I had become so obese, that the surgeons could not operate on me unless I could lose some weight.

This is the point that I began to see Dr. Ben-Zur. The counseling he provided me began to transform my life. I realized that I had passed a point of no return, and could allow life to keep happening to me, or I could take a stand to make some positive changes in my lifestyle. I took responsibility for myself and started to cultivate a new outlook and self discipline. By adopting a vegan diet and starting to get real forms of exercise, I was able to lose the weight I needed to undergo my surgery.

Diet and exercise allowed me the to undergo the operation that saved my life. I was able to prolong my life from the age of 50. Had I implemented the lifestyle changes I made just a few years earlier, I may have avoided the risky and complicated procedure all together. I hope others will listen to their hearts and give their bodies the nutrition and activity it needs long before their body's most important muscle dies of neglect.



Benzee the Heart says,
"Maintaining a healthy weight through diet and exercise will avoid complications like heart failure"

Cases of the Cardiovascular Institute

Case#2-"A Big Heart "

Driving for the basket I spin evading the blocker, as I set up for the shot and prepare to sink the winning point, suddenly my vision starts to turn black and the next thing I know, I'm lying on the ground with a group of sweaty players looking down on me. Now this is the third time I've suddenly passed out while playing sports, something must be wrong with me, but I am afraid to find out what it is, and I don't know who to see. Luckily for me, I am referred to the Cardiovascular Institute, where my life would be potentially saved and forever changed for the better through the diagnoses and treatment of my rare heart condition.

The first thing I noticed at Dr. Ben-Zur's office was that I didn't have to wait, I was brought directly into the room and was soon feeling more at ease by the comforting and friendly staff. By asking me questions about my symptoms and performing a couple quick tests using an EKG to see my heart's electrical activity and echocardiography to visualize my heart pumping, Dr. Ben-Zur began to explain my diagnosis to me: "Based on your history and the results of your test, we have determined that you have a condition known as Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM). HCM is a genetic condition, meaning it is passed on to you from one of your parents at birth. A mutation in one of your heart's proteins has caused your heart to become enlarged. When your heart is pumping blood, the enlarged portion in the center (interventricular septum), creates a blockage in the flow of blood into your body's circulation. As a result when you are playing sports, not enough blood and oxygen is reaching your brain and you are passing out. While there is no cure, through a combination of medication and lifestyle modifications it will still be possible for you to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle..."

I learned that I had a serious condition and that I was fortunate to discover it a young age, while life-threatening complications could still be prevented. People with HCM that do not receive proper treatment and take the necessary precautions may go on to develop arrhythmias, or abnormal heartbeats that can be fatal. It would be important for me to listen to my body and not push myself too hard while playing basketball and working out. Likewise, I also learned about the importance of staying well hydrated. Not only did the doctor prescribe me a medication called a Beta-blocker which decreased the stress and blockage of blood flow from my heart, but he provided me with valuable lifestyle coaching. I hadn't realized it at the time, but I was eating a diet that was high in fat and salt. By switching to a vegan diet, I was able to lower the stress on my already sensitive heart. My blood sugars were high, and through my new diet, I was able to bring these down as well, preventing the need for diabetes medications. The treatment and guidance provided to me by Dr. Ben-Zur has been invaluable to me learning and managing my condition with diet and moderate exercise before it was too late.



Benzee the Heart says,
"Don't ignore warning
signs, see the doctor be-
fore it's too late"

Testimonials

“Dr. Ben-Zur is a pure and simple life saver! When I met Dr. Ben-Zur, I was on seven different prescription medications (three for hypertension, three for diabetes, and one for cholesterol). I also was severely obese with a history of heart problems in my family. I had not had a heart attack, but I felt I needed to be examined. After regular visits with Dr. Ben-Zur and only a few months, I am off all medications, and have lost 50 pounds! I have never felt better, and never had more energy. He is a miracle worker. He will motivate you to lose weight and design a nutrition plan for you that really works. He is more than a doctor, but a life coach.”

“I went on the program ... No meat. No sugar. No salt. No more alcohol. If I couldn't walk or run, I was to find another way to get an hour of cardiovascular exercise every day. My blood pressure is normal, even though I am off all medication. I have not been in such good health in 15 years.”

- Dr. Mordecai Finley, Ph.D.

“Who exercises every day? it's crazy.” I have never exercised before, so it seemed unheard of to do it on a daily basis. Dr. Ben-Zur advised me to purchase a treadmill and start walking on its highest incline. I told him that I had no room for it in my home and I'll never forget his response: “If you need to take out the dining room table...do it! It will be the most important furniture in your home.” Exercise became part of my daily life... it's like brushing my teeth. I became vegetarian and not all but most of my symptoms subsided.”

- Katie Lefevre

“After my heart attack, my first priority was to survive and recover, but once past the immediate emergency, I knew I needed to make more permanent lifestyle changes. I lost 30 pounds and I'm about to turn 62. I'm in better shape than I was before my heart attack.”

- Dr. William Toutant, Ph.D.

Testimonials

“Before the heart attack, I weighed 210 pounds. With Dr. Ben-Zur’s health plan, I lost all the fat on my body and now weigh 168 pounds, which is my high school weight. At 6’3”, I’m in better shape today than when I was a college hockey player.”

- Michael Moline

“I was placed on a strict diet that enabled me to lose 30 pounds. My medications were eventually reduced from 15 pills per day to only six.”

-Harvey Turell

“I was diagnosed with type two diabetes six years ago and I used to take five different medications everyday. When Dr. Benzur spoke with me about he recommended a plant based diet. I cut out all breads, sugars, meat and after 10 days I feel I have gained more life than the last five years. I am now off my blood pressure and diabetes medications and my labs show normal levels. I am so thankful and happy and I highly recommend that everyone follows the same. I also lost 12 lbs. I am never starving, and I enjoy the food I make contrary to what many people believe about a vegan diet.”

-Shlomo Rushinek



Bill Clinton: A Cautionary Tale



- During his two terms, former President Clinton regularly ate hamburgers, french fries, donuts, barbecue, etc.



- He did not take into account his strong family history of heart disease with his diet.
- In 2004, he felt a sensation of chest tightness; fast-forward several days, and he was recovering from quadruple bypass surgery.
- After his quadruple bypass surgery, he became a vegan and dropped more than 20 pounds.

Moral of the story: you can do it, too!



Check out these great sources:

Dr. Ben-Zur's blog: <http://drbenzur.com/patient-resources/blog/>

Website for the documentary "Forks Over Knives" (2011): <http://www.forksoverknives.com/> (also has links to great vegan cookbooks)

- Can be purchased/downloaded at:
 - Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B005K23RS0?ie=UTF8&keywords=forks%20over%20knives&qid=1441041830&ref=sr_1_2&sr=8-2
 - Netflix: <http://dvd.netflix.com/Movie/Forks-Over-Knives/70185045>
 - YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1LUj3kxB9M>

Dr. Fuhrman's website: <http://www.drfuhrman.com/>

My Son, the Milkman (Naim Ben-Zur)

Benzee the Heart says, "You may need vitamin B-12 supplementation on a vegan diet, especially if you're pregnant."



Apps for Your Smart Phone



MyNetDiary Calorie Counter PRO

MyNetDiary.com Health & Fitness

★★★★☆ 11,038

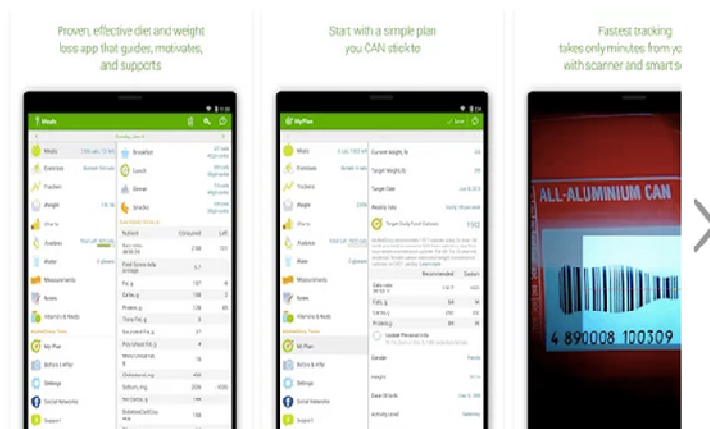
Everyone

Offers in-app purchases

This app is compatible with your device.

Add to Wishlist

Install



Pedometer & Fitness Tracker

SenseMe Health & Fitness

★★★★☆ 8,112

Everyone

This app is compatible with your device.

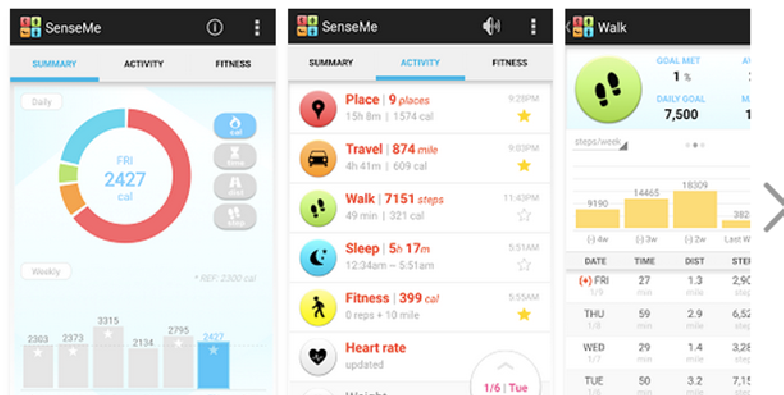
Add to Wishlist

Install

Benzee the Heart says,
"It is time for a Cardiac
Revolution!"



"Try some of our
suggestions and keep us
updated on your progress!"



Health! Track your walk steps, sleep, heart rate and more

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Dedication of the Paulette Tashnek-Wagner Cardiovascular Institute

Our clinic is dedicated to honoring the memory of Paulette Tashnek-Wagner, who embodied many of my own philosophies: treating everyone as if they were part of the family, putting others before oneself, and greeting each person with open arms. She was suddenly diagnosed with, and succumbed to, cancer. Her family, friends, and community constantly stood by her side and exemplified the values that guide our clinic's work.

We named the clinic after Paulette, our patient, to honor her strength and courage throughout the devastation caused by her illness. Her loss brought back vivid memories of the loss of my grandfather, which traumatized my family indescribably. This, more than anything else, motivated me to become the physician I am today.

I have and will always stand beside each and every person who puts trust in me. I will always put their needs before my own. I will stand ready and willing to teach anyone who would like to learn from me, so that others will continue with my conviction. I will fight, with all my might, to find cures for diseases and prevent disease whenever possible. I will fight, with all my might, to try to prevent these tragedies from afflicting other families.

Though our departed loved ones are now beyond our touch, their candles still burn, their hands still guide, and their voices still answer, forever within us.

In loving memory: Paulette Tashnek-Wagner.

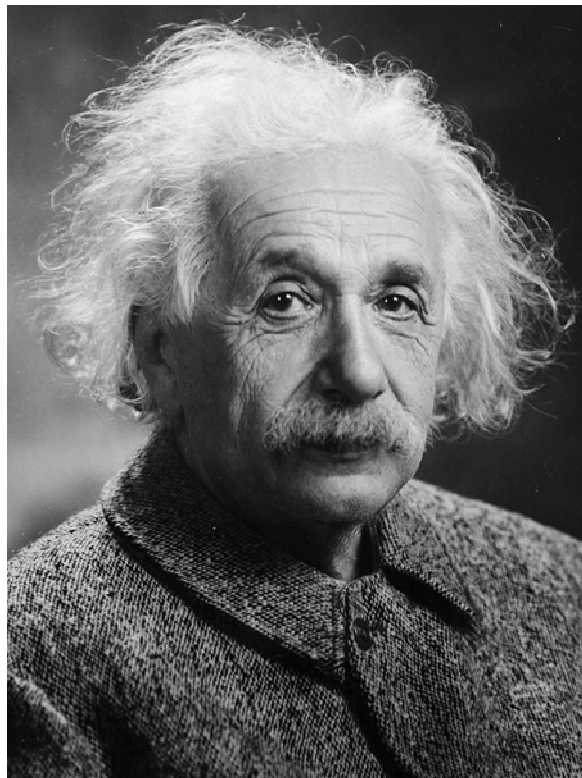
- Uri Ben-Zur, M.D., F.A.C.C.



**In Loving Memory of Paulette
Tashnek-Wagner**

“ It is my view that the vegetarian manner of living, by its purely physical effect on the human temperament, would most beneficially influence the lot of mankind. ”

— Albert Einstein, letter to *Vegetarian*



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The eternal providence has appointed me to watch over the life and health of Thy creatures. May the love for my art actuate me at all time; may neither avarice nor miserliness, nor thirst for glory or for a great reputation engage my mind; for the enemies of truth and philanthropy could easily deceive me and make me forgetful of my lofty aim of doing good to Thy children.

- The Oath of Maimonides