



COURI CENTER

—for Gynecology and Integrative Women's Health—

A note from Dr. Michele Couri

Since February is “Heart Disease Awareness Month,” I thought it would be appropriate to include this article by Dr. Mimi Guarneri that I found when I was researching some information on the Institute of Functional Medicine’s website. When I went to San Diego in 2010 to take the American Board of Integrative and Holistic Medicine Board exam, I had the distinct privilege of meeting Dr. Guarneri. She is truly one of the most inspiring and dedicated women that I know.

Dr. Mimi Guarneri is founder and medical director of Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine in La Jolla, CA, and has been an attending physician in cardiovascular disease at Scripps Clinic since 1995. Dr. Guarneri is the author of numerous articles that have appeared in such journals as the *Annals of Internal Medicine* and the *Journal of Echocardiology*. She has been honored by the American Heart Association, and won the 2011 Bravewell Leadership Award for her “significant contribution to the transformation of the U.S. health care system through the use of integrative medicine.” She is board certified in cardiology and internal medicine.

Dr. Guarneri is also the author of the excellent book, “*The Heart Speaks: A Cardiologist Reveals the Secret Language of Healing*”. What follows are notes from that book...

NOTES FROM *THE HEART SPEAKS*

There are many aspects of the heart:

- The mental heart: affected by hostility, stress and depression.
- The emotional heart: affected by loss
- The intelligent heart that has a nervous system of its own and communicates with the brain and other parts of the body.
- The spiritual heart that yearns for a higher purpose
- The universal heart that communicates with others

As many as half of coronary disease cases cannot be linked to the usual suspects: traditional risk factors of family history, smoking, high blood pressure, obesity, and inactivity. **There are many more factors creating susceptibility or resistance to heart disease and heart attacks than high cholesterol:**

1. A Sense of Community

From 1935 to 1984, Dr. Stewart Wolf conducted a study of people in Roseto, PA to investigate their lack of heart disease. Despite the community’s fatty diet, high smoking levels, and hazardous labor in slate quarries, they seemed to be resistant to heart disease, with rates less than half that of the rest of the country. The community was very close-knit, with family and neighbors watching over each other and celebrating religious festivals and family occasions together. These characteristics of a tight-knit community turned out to be better predictors of healthy hearts than cholesterol and smoking. These results have been validated by studies in several different countries (observing thousands of participants for 5 to 9 years) showing that socially isolated participants demonstrated a 2-to-3 fold increased risk of death from heart disease and all other causes compared with participants who felt most connected with others. These results were independent of other cardiac risk factors.

2. Stress

According to the Framingham study, 80% of people who had a heart attack had the same cholesterol levels as those who did not. In addition, most heart attacks occur when a blockage is less than 50%. At this percentage, patients may have no symptoms at all and may even pass an exercise stress test, which may only pick up blockages greater than 70%. It is not uncommon to hear that someone had a stress test one week and died of a heart attack the next. It isn’t until there is a blockage of 70% that a person displays the common symptoms of a heart attack.

Stress is comparable in power to hypertension as a risk factor for cardiac disease. Adrenaline, the major hormone associated with the stress response, raises blood pressure, increases heart rate, narrows blood vessels, makes platelets stickier, and raises cholesterol—all of which increase the risk of a cardiac event. Between 75% and 90% of all visits to healthcare practitioners are due to



A note from Dr. Michele Couri continued...

stress related disorders. The Mayo Clinic has concluded that psychological stress is the strongest indicator of future cardiac events. The Mayo Clinic has concluded that psychological stress is the strongest indicator of future cardiac events.

3. Echoes of Anger

We now know that diseases of the heart can be caused by other, more subtle factors—such as isolation, depression, and hostility—that have to do with not only how we live but how we experience our lives. There are recent studies suggesting that hostility may be a better predictor of heart disease than more traditional risk factors like cholesterol and smoking. The only risk factor that predicted heart disease risk more accurately than hostility was low levels of HDL.

4. The Landscape of Depression

Depression ranks behind high blood pressure and high cholesterol as a major risk factor for coronary artery disease. Those with heart disease who are depressed have a 4 times higher risk of death after a heart attack compared with those who are not depressed. At the University of Washington, an ongoing study found that factors such as depression, anxiety, a sense of self-efficacy, and the quality of spousal support were better predictors of a patient's degree of physical impairment than the severity of coronary artery disease, even when the arteries were blocked as much as 70%. Research now shows that having a grateful attitude allows people to better deal with stress, causing them to be more optimistic, which boosts immune function, and creates a better health and well-being.

5. Sacred Revelations

A double-blind study of 150 cardiac patients was done at Duke University to test the idea that spiritual influence could have a measurable impact. One arm of the study group contained patients who were prayed for by spiritual leaders around the world. Neither the doctors nor the patients knew of the prayer group. The patients who were prayed for had fewer adverse effects than those who were not. The health benefits of religious belief include lower blood pressure, lower heart rate, decreased anxiety, and enhanced sense of well-being.

6. The Persistence of Grief

The elevated risk of a heart attack in the first 24 hours after the loss of a loved one is 14 times higher than normal. Men who complain of high anxiety are up to 6 times more likely to suffer sudden cardiac death. Heart attack survivors who try to remain calm during emotional conflict have half the risk of heart attacks compared with those who tend to get angry.

This article reminds us of the importance of looking beyond the typical “risk factors” for heart disease like cholesterol and high blood pressure. We need to remember that the heart is a multi-layered complex organ possessing intelligence, memory and decision-making abilities independent from the mind --- and that healing the heart can have more to do with healing the mind and soul than we ever knew. This is the beauty of Integrative Medicine.

To Your Health,

Dr. Couri

Recipe of the Month: Sweet Potato Hash with Eggs

A nice variation on corned beef hash, this combination of sweet potatoes and peppers is seasoned with a pinch of paprika. It makes a delicious weekend breakfast or vegetarian supper.

2 medium (about 1 pound) sweet potatoes, peeled and finely diced
1/4 cup plus 1 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
3/4 cup finely diced red bell pepper (1 medium pepper)
3/4 cup finely diced green bell pepper (1 medium pepper)
1/2 cup finely diced red onion (about 1 small onion)
2 tsp. minced garlic
1 tsp. minced jalapeno pepper
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 tsp. minced oregano
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of paprika
4 large eggs

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the sweet potatoes for about 3 minutes, until crisp-tender. Drain and set aside.

Heat 1/2 cup of the extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the red and green pepper, onion, garlic, jalapeno pepper, and salt. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are soft. Increase the heat to medium-high and add the cooked sweet potatoes, oregano, black pepper, and paprika. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are soft and lightly browned.

Meanwhile, heat the remaining 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil in a large, preferable non stick, skillet over medium heat.



One at a time, break the eggs into a small bowl, then slide them in the skillet. Cook until the whites are set. Gently turn the eggs over and cook for about 1 minute for over easy, or about 2 minutes for over well.

Nutritional Analysis

Per 1/2 cup hash plus 1 egg: 294 Calories, 20g Fat, 3.7g Sat. Fat, 215mg Cholesterol, 4g Fiber, 8g Protein, 21g Carb, 332mg Sodium

This recipe and recipes like it can be found in The Ultra-Metabolism Cookbook by Mark Hyman, M.D. found in our Retail Store.

Keep Your Heart Healthy! *Go Red For Women!*

TLC: "Total Lifestyle by Couri" will help you do just that!

Happy February 2012!

February is "Heart Awareness Month," sponsored by the American Heart Association (AHA). Join the AHA and *The Couri Center* to make February 2012 the month in your life to begin a "total lifestyle" approach to improving your heart health. One in every *three* women in the United States dies from heart-related disease. Fortunately, this statistic can change! We at *The Couri Center* want you to join us in reducing this statistic. We join the AHA in building awareness of heart disease risk factors and in urging women to take concrete actions to reduce their risks of heart disease and related chronic diseases. Please support the AHA and *Go Red for Women!* by supporting the national *Wear Red Day* on February 3, 2012! On *Wear Red Day*, the AHA invites women and men to wear red, appreciate heart health, and personally take steps to prevent heart disease in themselves and in those around them. It is also an opportunity to make donations to the American Heart Association as it conducts research and supports efforts to fight heart disease. You can donate at the American Heart Association website. Every dollar helps.

The Couri Center also believes in reducing risks to heart disease. It has developed a women's program called the "TLC: Total Lifestyle," developed by Dr. Couri, to help clients make small changes to reduce their risks of heart disease, diabetes, and many other preventable diseases. Dr. Couri provided an overview in the January newsletter. One facet of the TLC program focuses on reducing a

woman's "cardiometabolic risks"; that is, identifying and reducing the risks that lead to heart attack and other chronic diseases which eventually lead to heart disease if left uncontrolled.

Medical research has made great advances in treating heart disease over this past century, but they are frequently counteracted by the negative health trends in our country. Consuming increased calories at meals, more refined foods, more processed foods, more fried food, and more and more fast food as well as "super-sizing" have created the SAD diet [appropriately named], or "Standard American Diet" of which we are all guilty of consuming at times. Additionally, we often claim to be "too busy" to exercise. These harmful habits have led to an overweight and obese society, exponentially increasing cases of heart disease, diabetes, joint diseases relative to obesity, and depression. YOU don't have to be part of those statistics!

The Couri Center exists to help lower the risks of these major health impairments. The "TLC Cardiometabolic program" identifies each client's heart risks and helps her modify her lifestyle so that she can live a fuller, healthier, and happier life. TLC is a multi-disciplinary program, involving ten steps to health and wellness. The entire office collaborates to help each client improve her overall health. Initially, the client meets with Dr. Couri, Sue Lang NP, Terry Polanin ANP, or her primary health care provider, who requests lab work as an initial screening to uncover possible risk markers. Each client receives her lab results, a summary of her health risks, and an appointment with Leslie, our personal trainer/nutritional consultant, for an assessment to plan a program to guide the client to healthier eating and weight loss, if needed. Leslie designs an exercise and food program to fit each woman's personal lifestyle. Along the way, she guides

each woman on how to fit healthy lifestyle changes into her life as well as stay motivated. At various times through the program, each client sees our nurse educator, our massage therapist, our meditation consultant, and her provider. The "TLC Cardiometabolic" approach uses emerging and traditional risk markers as well as integrative therapies to prioritize preventive or intervention strategies that have the maximum impact on improving a woman's overall health and well being for now and her future

You can make a difference in your health and the health of your family and those around you. Be an example! Take the first step! The Couri Center wants to partner with you to prevent heart disease and improve your overall well being. Choose a healthy lifestyle today to improve your future. Be an example to your children and grandchildren so they avoid the risks of obesity and inactivity. Take that step to be a role model for others and for yourself. Our TLC program is available to you. But remember, it is not a "diet". It is a total lifestyle approach to healthy living and well being! It is your investment in the future of your health and the health of those you love! Make February a heart-healthy month for yourself *and* those you love! Call for an appointment now!

Happy February!

Terry Polanin, MS, APN



Robotic Surgery AT LAST...

A robotic gynecological surgery that requires:

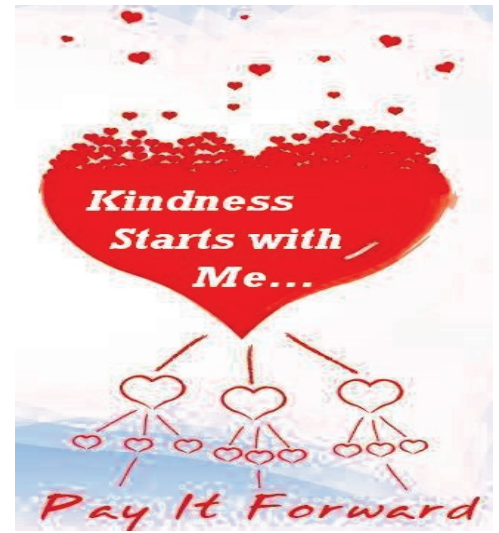
- Less Pain
- Fewer Complications
- Less Hospitalization
- Less Risk of Wound Infection
- Less Scarring
- Less Blood Loss
- Quicker recovery and return to normal activities

Life doesn't wait for you, so why spend time recovering, when you can be out LIVING!

Be Kind to Yourself

We are more often taught “to be kind to others”, “to be nice to others”, “to be good to others” and so on. It is very rare that we are taught, “to be kind to ourselves”. Whether we like to admit or not, we all make mistakes; we make poor choices. Since we are not all knowing, not all-powerful, it is inevitable that we make mistakes. Sometimes we make mistakes unconsciously; sometimes we make mistakes out of our ignorance; sometimes we make mistakes knowingly, out of helplessness. When we don't live up to our own expectations, we put ourselves down, in the form of self-criticism, self-judgment, self-condemnation, guilt etc. When we cannot accept ourselves as we are, we cannot accept others. When we are not kind to ourselves, we

cannot be kind to others. Being kind to one self means to accept one's limitations and helplessness. Our mind is limited, our body is limited. With our limited body and limited mind, there is no way we are going to be PERFECT. We are bound to make mistakes or poor choices. If we can accept this fact, we can embrace our humanity at the level of our mind and body. In my observation what I have noticed is when the body is relaxed and mind is calm, usually we make better choices. When our body/mind is not relaxed our choices come from reaction or impulses. Being kind to oneself also means to take care of the instruments of body and mind, so they can be used appropriately. Our body and mind may be limited, however our true nature is pure awareness that is choiceless, ever pure and ever free. It is our choice, whether to live from the level of our mind or from the level of choiceless awareness. Here is a quote from Dalai Lama – “If you want



others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” Practicing the value of “non-violence” is not just for others; we need to be non-violent towards ourselves too.

Peace, Venkatesh

Meditation is offered at the Couri Center Saturday mornings at 10 am. Meditation is open to the public and free of charge.

Just Announced!

Dr. Couri will be speaking at the 2012 Living Healthy Series presented by the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria.

She will be speaking on “Do you need Vitamins?” March 20th from 6:30 pm-7:20 pm.



Free! Sign up for the 12-Week Weight Loss Program and receive an additional week FREE!

*Must sign up for program between the dates of 2/13/2012-2/24/2012.

Meet our staff:

Dr. Michele Couri M.D., FACOG	Doctor of Gynecology and Integrative Medicine
Susan F. Lang MS, APN, CNM, LCCE	Advance Practice Nurse
Terry Polanin MS, APN, FNP-BC	Nurse Practitioner
Leslie Rusch-Bayer BS, CPT	Certified Personal Trainer



Having diabetes can increase your healthcare costs by \$9,000 per year...



Total Lifestyle by Couri

...isn't it cheaper to just prevent diabetes from occurring in the first place?

TLC™ is a disease reduction and prevention program that is used to reduce or eliminate the effects of cardiometabolic diseases, adrenal fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, bone deficiencies, and/or weight problems.



COURI CENTER
—for Gynecology and Integrative Women's Health—

“Restoring Health to Women's Healthcare.”