



Spirit of HEART HEALTH

Two years ago Geraldine "Gerri" Cegielski seemed like the epitome of energy and health. "I loved to travel, meet new people and see new places," says the 82-year-old Houston resident, who also swam, enjoyed ocean cruises, owned her own townhouse and volunteered at the Texas Heart Institute's Library and Learning Resource Center at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital. So it

was a surprise to Cegielski when she suddenly developed severe pain in her shoulder. "I just blamed it on age," she says. An EKG and Echocardiogram later, however, determined otherwise: her aortic valve was closing rapidly, requiring immediate surgery. "I've always been healthy and never thought of having a heart problem," she says. "It was very, very sneaky."



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BE FINE
IF WE WERE
TREATING
COOKIES.

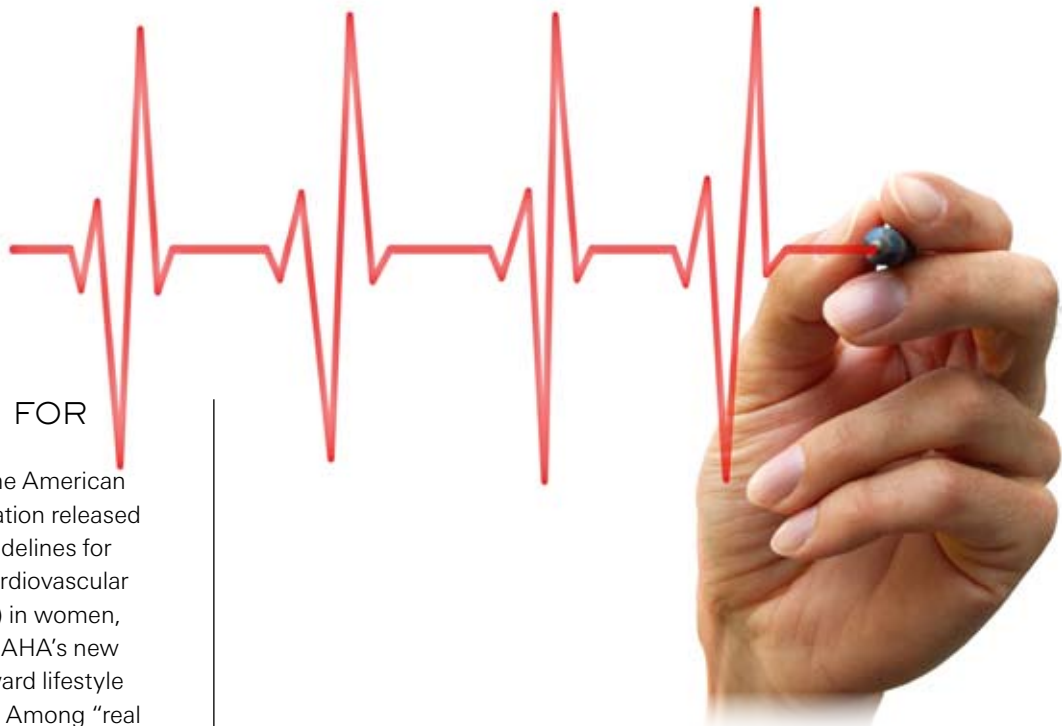
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It's a whole new approach to healthcare



WISDOM FOR WOMEN

In February the American Heart Association released its revised guidelines for preventing cardiovascular disease (CVD) in women, reflecting the AHA's new approach toward lifestyle interventions. Among "real life" topics broached:

- Smoking. Don't do it—and avoid second-hand smoke as well.
- Exercise. Do it—and do so consistently, combining 150 minutes of moderate activity with 75 minutes of vigorous action each week.
- Blood pressure. Maintain 120/80 through less sodium, more exercise, better weight control and more fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products.
- Omega-3 fatty acids. Eat more, preferably in foods like fresh fish or at least via capsule form (the EPA recommends 1,800 mg/day).



That said, Cegielski faced this life-threatening crisis armed with two major advantages: her otherwise good health and the prospect of being treated at the renowned Texas Heart Institute, one of the nation's largest cardiovascular centers, founded in 1962 by the pioneering heart surgeon Dr. Denton A. Cooley. "It was my idea to go there," says Cegielski, who was confident knowing that the Institute's 160-member professional staff had already performed more than 100,000 open heart operations. Her surgery came just after Memorial Day, 2009; by the Fourth of July she was driving, shopping and back volunteering. Today, aside from a mild prescription to control her cholesterol, Cegielski is again living life to the fullest. "I feel blessed," she says.

GETTING HEART SMART

Cegielski's story serves as an invaluable lesson for all Americans that while a serious cardiovascular challenge can strike at any time, the treatment of and recovery from heart disease, not to mention its prevention, is more attainable than ever. In just the two generations since Dr. Cooley performed the first heart transplant in the U.S. in 1968, our knowledge of the cardiovascular system has grown by leaps and bounds. Now, all the elements of good heart health are within our grasp: proper nutrition, the right type and amount of exercise, ongoing strides in medicine and medical technology, and simple, effective ways to reduce stress in our daily lives.

If there's an operative word for having a healthier heart in 2011, it's prevention. "Our goal is to prevent heart disease rather than just treat it as a chronic illness," says Dr. Andrea Klemes, D.O., F.A.C.E. and Medical Director of MDVIP, a comprehensive alternative to traditional healthcare that focuses on strong patient-doctor relationships and long-term wellness care. A physician can and should be a patient's partner in heart health, she says, "looking at all the pieces (e.g., family history, diet, and lab work including cholesterol advanced lipid testing) and putting them together with you to give you a better insight into your health." To wit, she cites a cutting-edge diagnostic program with The Cleveland Clinic designed to detect MPO, an enzyme found in white blood cells that, in elevated

We gave Terri Dome a future. That is what we do.



Terri Dome

Terri Dome, a successful international marketing executive for a major movie studio in California, had it all, until her heart was ravaged by the effects of treatments she had received years before for a childhood cancer. She came to the Texas Heart Institute for help.

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"When I first came, I was very nervous, very scared and very angry: I was in full-blown denial," says Terri. "The moment I met my doctors I knew I would be alright. I was safe. I was in good hands."

Terri is now making the most of her new life, reaching out to counsel other women heart patients.

She, like countless others we have helped, is living the future she did not have. No wonder *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked us among the top 10 heart centers for 20 consecutive years.



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circulating levels, may be useful in determining risks for heart attacks and strokes.

Prevention also rates high with the American Heart Association. "With all that we've learned and all the tools at our disposal, living with a healthier heart is a totally attainable goal today," says Dr. Richard Stein, director of the Urban Community Cardiology Program at New York University's School of Medicine. Stein, who literally wrote the book on this subject (*Outliving Heart Disease: The 10 Rules for Prevention and Treatment*, Newmarket Press), says that both doctors and patients need to start with the fact that 75 percent of deaths from strokes and heart attacks derive from arteriosclerosis. "Plaque of almost any size can clog an artery," he says—and as Gerri Cegielski discovered. "It's clear that diet is a major component here, and it's something that we can all control," he says.

Another buzz word that Stein, Klemes and others can agree on is moderation. Red wine, a rib-eye steak and chocolate mousse are all okay in most diets, says Stein, but not daily or even several times a week. "Stay active," advises Klemes, who recommends walking, riding a bike and even gardening as ways to work up a moderate sweat. "Even grocery shopping can be a form of exercise," says Klemes. And while cruising the food aisles, she adds, keep fatty, salty foods to a minimum (again: moderation) and be sure to read up on all the ingredients before hitting the checkout line.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

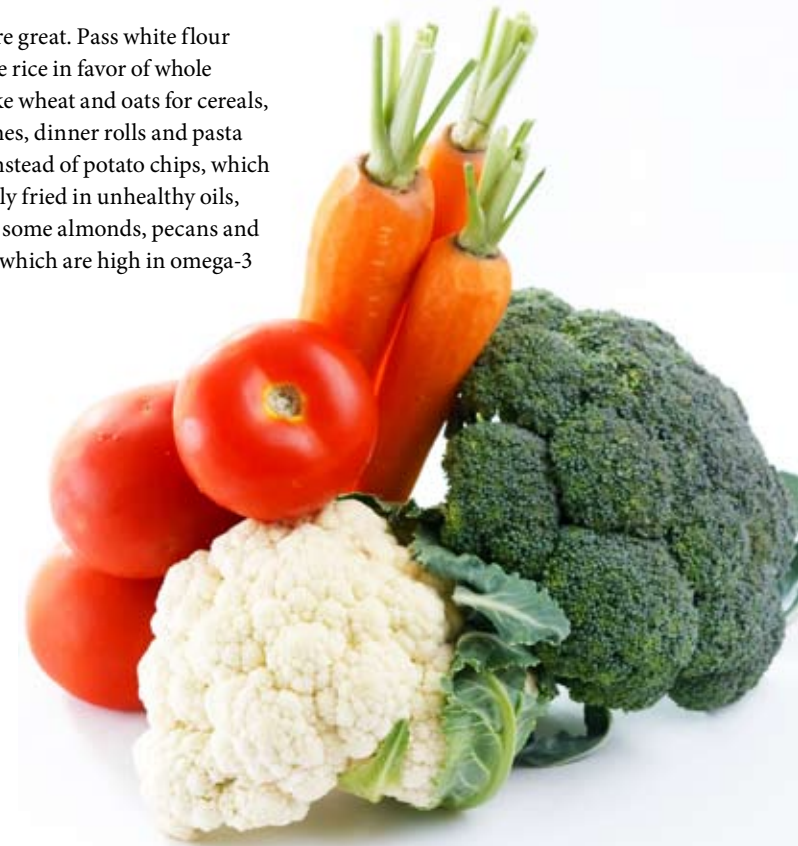
Is there a link between a deficiency in Vitamin D and heart ailments? That's what researchers at Cenegenics Medical Institute, which focuses on age management, have been investigating. In a recent report Cenegenics discussed the possible relationship between diastolic heart failure and end-stage heart failure and a deficiency in Vitamin D, which is naturally derived from exposure to sunlight and some fresh and fortified foods like fish and dairy products. The study's emphasis was on improving cardiovascular health and disease through supplementation, says Cenegenics, which added that while vitamin D does play a vital role in diastolic heart failure and end-stage heart failure its understanding of the link is still evolving.

WE ARE WHAT WE EAT

A little nutritional knowledge can lead us a long way toward a healthier cardiovascular system. These handy tips are easy to follow and won't break anyone's bank:

- Keep it fresh. Fruits and vegetables in their natural form are extremely healthy. For example, bananas contain potassium, which can inhibit the effect of sodium on blood pressure. Apples, pears, cherries, berries, broccoli, cauliflower and string beans are also A-List eats, rich in vitamins and nutrients good for the heart muscle.
- Read those labels. Most processed foods are now required to list their specific ingredients and amounts, so shop for products low in sugar, saturated fat and sodium.

- Grains are great. Pass white flour and white rice in favor of whole grains like wheat and oats for cereals, sandwiches, dinner rolls and pasta dishes. Instead of potato chips, which are usually fried in unhealthy oils, reach for some almonds, pecans and walnuts, which are high in omega-3 fats.



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