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PORT HURON, MI

Partners at Heart
MERCY HOSPITAL
Port Huron Hospital

2601 Electric Ave.
Port Huron, MI 48060

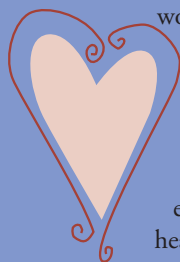
HeartLink support group welcomes heart patients



If you or a loved one has heart disease or is at risk for it, Heartlink may help. This support group addresses issues that impact individuals who've had a heart attack, bypass surgery or other heart surgery, as well as those who wear a pacemaker or suffer from angina (chest pain).

Led by a trained facilitator, the group meets monthly at Port Huron Hospital. It seeks to educate and inform participants about heart disease and how to manage it on a personal level. For details, please call (810) 989-3663.

We're committed to "heart healthy" services



Mercy Hospital and Port Huron Hospital have been working together for more than a decade to provide comprehensive cardiac care to residents of the Blue Water Area and surrounding communities. By combining resources, these two community hospitals are able to offer advanced services for early detection, treatment and prevention of heart disease.

The physicians and staff involved in this comprehensive heart program aim to make the Blue Water Area one of the "heart healthiest" communities in the country, one patient at a time.

For more information, please call: (800) 326-1811
or (810) 985-1839

Get the skinny on low-fat cooking



If you love brownies, chili and other comfort food, you can still indulge in these favorites even on a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet. Port Huron Hospital's

Chef Dave Straney will show you how when he hosts the Healthy Heart Cooking School on Thursday, Feb. 26, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Girl Scout Building, 2186 Water, Port Huron Township.

Sponsored by Partners at Heart, the cooking school will feature Chef Dave preparing all-time favorites with a healthy twist. Come to watch the preparations and enjoy the food samples. Prior to the cooking demonstration, Dr. Tumma, of Cardiovascular Associates of Port Huron, will provide tips on how to develop life-long habits to ward off heart disease. The program promises to be a fun learning experience for you, your family and friends.

For details, call-1-800-326-1811.

Partners at Heart

W i n t e r 2 0 0 4

Partners at Heart



Control Diabetes to ease risk of Cardiovascular Disease

People with diabetes are at greater risk of having a heart attack or stroke (both symptoms of cardiovascular disease) than an individual without diabetes. In fact, their risk is as high as someone who has already had a heart attack or stroke.



Dr. Samman

"With diabetes, there's a tendency to have blockages or plaque in the arteries anywhere in the body," said Bashar Samman, M.D., of Cardiology Associates. "Because diabetic patients have a higher risk of cardiovascular disease, they need to be treated even before symptoms occur."

In St. Clair County, 7,677 adults have diagnosed diabetes, an estimated 3,430 have undiagnosed diabetes, and 9,740 have pre-diabetes. (Pre-diabetes is defined as having an elevated blood sugar level of 126 mg/dl on two separate occasions with a blood sugar fasting test, and a random blood sugar test: 200 mg/dl on two separate occasions.)

Diabetes is one of the fastest growing diseases in the nation, having increased 61 percent since 1990. Michigan has the ninth highest diabetes rate in the U.S., and the fourth highest rate of obesity, a complicating factor in diabetes and heart disease.

It's alarming news, but something you can act on. Partners at Heart can help.

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Welcome

This newsletter is designed to:

- **PREVENT HEART DISEASE** through lifestyle practices
- **Provide Information** about state-of-the-art care
- **Help Patients** with heart disease live well by practicing heart-healthy habits.

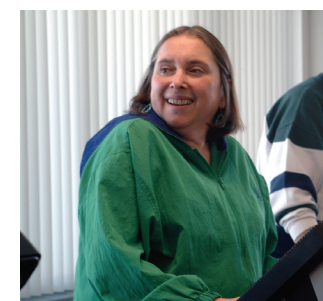
Diabetes and heart disease often go hand-in-hand

Peggy Vuylsteke, a 51-year-old educator who recently retired from MSU Extension, has to balance two different diseases: onset II diabetes and heart disease.

In June, she suffered a heart attack and didn't know it at the time. The heart attack began with flu-like symptoms on a Thursday. Two days later, she recalled feeling like she had "been hit by a truck – everything ached." That Monday, June 23, she went to the office of her internist who conducted an EKG to confirm the diagnosis of heart attack. That afternoon, she had a stent placed in a blocked artery by M.C. Reddy, M.D., of Cardiology Associates.

Vuylsteke made a full recovery from the heart attack and did not have any side effects from stent placement. "I had heard about the Partner's program and knew others who had treatment at Port Huron Hospital and Mercy Hospital and had done well," said Vuylsteke.

In addition to expert medical care, she was able to recover quickly because she has exercised for years and follows a healthy diet. "My husband and I usually walk several times a week at the cemetery that is near my home in Yale. Many times I walk the high school



Peggy Vuylsteke

track. And in the winter, I walk indoors at the mall."

After treatment, Vuylsteke joined the Partner's at Heart exercise rehabilitation (Phase 3) program at the Mercy Center in Fort Gratiot. She works out on the step machine, rower, stationery bicycle and treadmill. "It's an excellent preventive health program," she said.

"One of the nice things about the program is that they have specialists (exercise physiologists and an R.N.), who know what my heart rate should be and get me to that level while exercising. Both of them are very cautious and oversee the exercise program."

Vuylsteke's cholesterol level was fine when she had the heart attack and she keeps it in check. As an early childhood educator at Baker College and a former Extension home economist, she knows the importance of being educated about one's health. Despite a careful

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Cardiovascular Disease

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This collaborative program of Mercy Hospital and Port Huron Hospital sponsors many community outreach screenings and events to educate people in the Blue Water Area about the risks of heart disease, provide information about diet and exercise, and screen for risk factors of high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. Sophisticated services to diagnose and treat heart disease are jointly offered at Mercy and Port Huron hospitals as a means of providing comprehensive care without duplicating efforts.

In order to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease among diabetic patients, blood sugar levels must be under control, and people should exercise, eat a low-fat diet and give up smoking if it's a habit. "Diabetic patients who smoke are basically guaranteed that they will have a heart problem," Dr. Samman warns.

Dr. Samman advises diabetic patients to maintain a blood pressure of 120/70 mmHg, which is a lower target than for non-diabetic patients. Medication may be needed to control high cholesterol levels or elevated blood pressure.

Diabetes and heart disease

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diet and exercise, genetics played a leading role in her heart attack. Her father's side of the family has diabetes, while her mother's side has high cholesterol, a risk factor for heart disease.

Even while dealing with health concerns, Vuylsteke maintains a positive attitude and is an inspiration to others. Her advice: "Eat a healthy diet in moderation" (no super-sizing!). "Read food labels" (and limit triglycerides) and "Get out and walk."

Improvements to bypass surgery mean quicker recovery

Coronary artery bypass surgery (CABG) plays a defining role in the treatment of heart disease, even with an increase in angioplasty procedures. (Angioplasty involves reopening blocked arteries with a balloon catheter and often using a stent to keep the artery open). The surgical bypass procedure uses arteries from other parts of the body, primarily the forearm, to build new connections around blocked arteries.

People who need bypass surgery typically have three or more blocked arteries. "It depends on the location of the blockages and how severe the blockages are," notes Vernon Dencklau, D.O., of St. Clair Cardiovascular Surgeons, PLC.

The longer the blockage, the less likely a stent will provide a long-term repair. Shorter blockages are better suited to angioplasty because the rate of restenosis (repeat blockage) is reduced, according to Dr. Dencklau.

Smoking greatly increases the risk of blocked arteries. Dr. Dencklau notes that it is not uncommon to operate on patients in their 40s who are smokers.

CABG surgery has been enhanced in recent years by a technique known as OPCAB (off pump coronary artery bypass) in which surgeons operate on a patient while the heart is still beating. In some cases, this has benefits over the use of a heart-lung machine, which temporarily replaces the function of the heart and lungs during bypass surgery.

By performing bypass surgery "off pump," patients may require fewer blood transfusions and, in some cases, a shorter length of stay. At present, the newer "off pump" surgery is performed on less than 10 percent of



heart bypass patients at Port Huron Hospital, but that number is expected to increase as the procedure becomes more a part of mainstream practice.

As society ages and risk factors such as obesity and diabetes become more common, the number of patients with heart disease and stroke will grow. Smokers and others who don't change at-risk behaviors will continue to comprise a high percentage of patients undergoing surgery for heart disease.

While minimally invasive procedures (performed through small openings) were initially viewed as a better option for open-heart surgery, traditional surgery has proven more successful at keeping blockages open over the long term. Another component of heart surgery is treating diseased or malfunctioning valves. Valve surgery may one day outnumber the cases of open-heart bypass surgery as nonsurgical options in coronary disease continue to advance.

With all the changes and innovations in heart surgery, the independent surgeons on staff with the Partners at Heart program will continue to incorporate proven new techniques to provide the best in patient care.

Heart attack hits former "jock" in prime time

Some would think that a 49-year-old former "jock" would be unlikely

to have a heart attack. But Gary Cummins, of Port Huron, is living proof that it happens.

"I had a heart attack the day after Thanksgiving in 2001. I was out raking the yard," Cummins said. "About an hour after coming inside, I started getting feverish, had the chills and started vomiting." Neither his wife Lynn nor teen-age daughter Ashley was home at the time, so he called his sister Sue, who lives nearby. She came over and called an ambulance.

Upon arrival at the Port Huron Hospital emergency room, Cummins was diagnosed with a heart attack and was taken directly to the Cardiac Catheterization lab. There, Bashar Samman, M.D., of Cardiology Associates, placed some stents in during angioplasty to restore normal blood

flow to his heart. Cummings was discharged after a brief hospital stay.



Gary Cummins

"I have a lot of faith in Dr. Samman. He is a fantastic doctor. He puts you at ease during the catheterization," Cummins said. "I was awake during the procedure. Between the surgical team and the doctor, it was easier than going to the

dentist." In all, Cummins has had three angioplasties, including a stent placed this past November. He now knows the symptoms of a heart attack and realizes that he is prone to blockages in the arteries leading to his heart. Any sign of chest discomfort sets off an alarm as do his other, non-traditional symptoms of heart attack.

He has exercised regularly throughout his life, playing softball as an adult and team sports in high school. "I've always exercised hard," said Cummins. Now, he exercises at a controlled pace under the watchful eyes of Pam Pung

and Gail Kundrick, exercise physiologists at the Cardiac Rehabilitation Center, a service of Partners at Heart.

Cummins, 51, is mindful of the need to closely monitor his heart health, especially since his mother died of heart disease. His advice to others: "Watch for symptoms. If you're not sure what's going on, just get to the hospital. Let the professionals evaluate your symptoms."

When a heart attack doesn't feel like a heart attack

Well-documented symptoms of a heart attack include mild or severe chest pain or discomfort, unexplained shortness of breath and sudden fatigue or illness. But there are other, less obvious symptoms. These include:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea or indigestion
- Flu-like symptoms, including fever and chills

If you are feeling any of these symptoms and do not have the flu, go to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.

Gain control—not weight—over the food you eat

While heart disease can strike despite the best preventive measures, it still pays to be in control of your diet. Not only can it help ward off a heart attack, it can also help you spring back after an adverse episode of heart disease.

An advisor to the Partners at Heart program, dietitian Sue Colarossi, RD, CDE, supports using the food pyramid as a guide to good eating. She recommends eating a balanced diet of healthy food in moderation.

Colarossi and her colleagues provide one-on-one consultation to patients who sign up for Cardiac Rehabilitation. Her department also conducts classes in reading food labels, eating right when dining out, and choosing low-fat substitutions. Group size ranges from five people to 15, providing an ideal class setting with time for questions and answers.

"We are in a super-size nation. While we 'biggie-size' everything, we are super-sizing our waist line," warns Colarossi, manager of Nutrition Services and Diabetes Education at Mercy Hospital. "We've developed a fast food and convenience food craze for our busy lifestyle. We often make poor food choices — high in calories but low in nutrition," said Colarossi. "Then we spend hours watching TV and playing video and computer games. On top of that, most people do not get enough exercise. This com-

bination — poor food choices and a sedentary lifestyle — can lead to obesity and a greater risk of heart disease."

Tips to tame your diet:

- Be aware of serving sizes. Don't eat two or more servings just because of how it's packaged.
- Most convenience foods have higher fat, sugar and salt than the food you prepare at home.
- Eat more cereal, especially whole grain cereal with skim milk.
- A colorful diet (orange, red, yellow, green) provides the needed nutrients.
- When dining out, share a main portion and get an extra salad or vegetable.
- When watching TV, surfing the internet or working at a computer, don't mindlessly eat. Be aware of what you are consuming and don't eat out of a bag. Use a small container (cup or bowl) so you know exactly how much you are eating.

