



February 19, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Collateralization

This week I've talked about the major arterial blood flow to the heart, the one called the Widowmaker. As I said in Wednesday's message, if that didn't move you to action, I don't think anything will. But let me sweeten the incentive for you. It's something called collateralization.

The Unknown Benefit of Exercise

Exercise is good for you. Aerobic exercise trains your heart and makes it stronger; think of it as weight training for the heart. When it's stronger, the heart can contract more efficiently, pump more blood per beat, and that increases your stamina. But one of the least-talked about benefits of exercise is the increase in the number of blood vessels that feed your heart. It's called collateralization.

Your major coronary arteries are the size they are, for the most part, but with regular exercise training, they learn to stretch better. That allows them to bring more blood to the heart tissue. But you also grow more of the tiny blood vessels called capillaries that feed the heart muscle. Remember why the heart is red? The more you exercise, the greater this collateral circulation grows.

Why is that a big deal? If you have some sort of blockage in the coronary arteries, the collateral blood flow can pick up some of the slack. Remember, sudden death during a heart attack is caused, in part, by the lack of oxygen to the heart tissue. With the collateral branches you build by regular exercise, more heart muscle continues to get oxygen and your risk of sudden death if you have a heart attack goes down. And if you can extend that window of time to get treatment and get your heart back on track, your chances of survival go way up. How great is that?

What kind of exercise is best? Anything rhythmic such as walking, running, cycling, dancing, swimming, etc.; 30 to 45 minutes a day helps the process of collateralization. As with any exercise, start slowly and build up.

Most of us want to see the fruits of our labor when it comes to exercise—being thinner, looking better. But when it comes to exercise, it's what you can't see that can save your life.

Heart Attack Prevention Webinar

You've never heard what you'll hear during the *Heart Attack Prevention Webinar* tomorrow. I guarantee it.

There's so much information available about having a healthy heart, you may be thinking, "Ho-hum. Dr. Chet's going to say what he's always said about taking care of your heart. Why invest the time hearing the same things I've always heard?"

Here's why: if you've ever heard of the 80/20 Rule in business, you know that 20% of your effort gets you 80% of your results. Can that be applied to reducing your risk of having a heart attack? I think so, and I'm going to explain that during the webinar. When you're crunched for time and resources, what are the most important things you can do to protect your heart? You won't know if you don't reserve your seat now—just click [here](#).

The Bottom Line

There's a lot you can do for your health through diet, supplementation, and managing stress. But you've probably heard that if exercise were a pill, it would be the most prescribed pill on the market. Collateralization is the big reason why. But there's no pill, people. You just have to do it. If Wednesday's message didn't scare you to action, I'm hoping that today's message will entice you to action.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

WGVU FM 88.5/95.3 **npr** ***Straight Talk on Health***

Hear Dr. Chet's take on the latest health news and research—listen to *Straight Talk on Health* at 7 p.m. Sunday in the Eastern Time Zone on WGVU-FM 88.5 or 95.3, or listen live via the Internet by going to www.wgvu.org and clicking on "Listen Live" in the gray bar at the top.

The health information in this message is designed for educational purposes only. It's not a substitute for medical advice from your healthcare provider, and you should not use it to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease. It's designed to motivate you to work toward better health, and that includes seeing your healthcare professional regularly. If what you've read raises any questions or concerns about health problems or possible diseases, talk to your healthcare provider today.

Subscribe to the Message from Dr. Chet at DrChet.com — © Chet Zelasko PhD LLC