

Summary April, 2012 program**“Heart to Heart: Exercise, Heart Disease and Post-Polio”**

Speakers: Gordon Wertz, RN, Clinical Coordinator and Chrissie Wilson, RN, Take Charge Cardiac Rehab and Ocala Health System  
Fred Shirley, MS, PT, CEAS, our groups advisor from Beverly Hills, Rehab Center.

**The Risk Factors of Heart Disease,** Gordon Wertz, RN, Clinical Coordinator

There are several risks which Gordon explained in detail. The most prevalent risks are Diabetes, Smoking, Cholesterol, High Blood pressure and Obesity. Risk factors translate to heart disease. We need to not only know what the Risk Factors are but how they cause damage. It is important to think of these as a low level chronic disease state. If these things are not treated over a period of time they will cause damage. Heart disease starts as arterial disease or blockage in the arteries. There is a difference between arteries and veins. Arteries carries blood from the heart and veins carries blood to the heart.

Gordon passed around a model of a cross section of an artery which showed that arteries are made up of 3 layers the outer layer, the muscle and the inner layer, which is the thinnest layer. He explained the functions of these 3 layers. This inner layer can be easily damaged from cholesterol and high blood pressure, which can lead to damage to the heart. Thus, it is very important to follow the regimen that is recommended by your health care provider, Making sure you are diligent in taking any medication that are prescribed and live a heart healthy life style.

**Eating For a Healthy Heart,** Chrissie Wilson, RN

Chrissie said to take the word diet out of your vocabulary. (With humor, she pointed out that the first three letters of “diet” are “d-i-e.”) Instead of talking about “diet,” she spoke about eating healthy for a healthy heart. Choosemyplate.gov is an excellent website to help you get a handle on healthy eating. The problems with healthy eating are:

1. Overwhelming just the thought “Oh I have got to eat healthy”.
2. Figuring out what and how much to eat.
3. Can be costly.
4. Depriving, “I need to give up foods”
5. Complicated to know what is or isn’t healthy.

Chrissie said it is time to stop dieting and set healthy life changing goals. First of all keep it simple. Don’t try to fix all your bad eating habits at one time.

1. Eat sensibly MOST of the time, and you should not feel guilty about allowing yourself one guilt-free meal a week.
2. Follow eating from the food pyramid every day.
3. Learn to shape your plate.
4. Pay attention to portions.

To help you it is a good idea to start a food diary. You can find one on the website [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov). Eat sensibly every day. Balance your calories. Make conscious effort to eat the foods you should be eating and cut back on the ones you shouldn’t be eating. Allow yourself to cheat once in a while without feeling guilty.

The latest food pyramid is a little different than it used to be. The largest groups are Grains and vegetables almost equal in size as is fruit, next is low fat dairy, next is a very small amount of meat and beans and fats

which should be used primarily for cooking. You can find the latest pyramid chart on the web at [pyramid.gov](http://pyramid.gov). Eat a variety of fresh, frozen or canned fruit rather than juice. Also eat lots of leafy green vegetables.

It is very important to get 3 cups of Calcium a day which can be in the form of low fat milk, cheese or yogurt.

Shape your dinner plate, half should be fruits and vegetables, a quarter meat a quarter grains (potatoes are considered grains).

Portion control is quite important. One secret is to use a smaller plate, like a dessert plate and divide your plate into quarters. Portion food out before you eat. Don't serve food family style; fill your plate before coming to the table. In restaurants get the small or lunch size portion or split the order with a friend, or ask for a doggie bag when your meal is served and put half of it in the doggie bag. Slow down and concentrate on what you are eating and how much you are eating. You can use your hand as a measuring device when you are out. The palm of our hand is equal to 8 oz of meat. The tip of your thumb equals 1 teaspoon, your thumb up to first joint is 1 oz. of cheese.

Fats should be no more than 7% of your daily calorie intake. Unsaturated fat is the best kind of fat followed by saturated and trans fats (which are very bad). It is important to limit cholesterol and sodium in your diet. Large chain restaurants provide nutrition information on items in their menus. Be sure to read labels, do research and become an informed consumer.

### “Wellness the Essence of Life” Fred Shirley, MS, PT, CEAS

Fred has been a consultant with our support group for 17 years. He is very versed on physical therapy for those experiencing Post Polio.

The heart is a tremendous muscle that the rest of the body relies on. Most problems are a result of wear and tear over a period of time. Risk factors for muscle injuries are misuse of medication, emotional stress, proper nutrition, lack of rest and smoking.

Wellness options, if you have had a cardiac event cardiac rehab is not an option and extremely important. After Cardiac Rehab is complete one may continue exercise with other options. Consistency is very important. An exercise program should be based on the individual's needs. No two polio victims are the same.

The benefits of exercise increased cardiovascular function reduce stress on mind and joints. If you have had Polio you will have some tightness which you use for function. If you go to a physical therapist be sure they understand Post Polio and know not to stretch these areas. Other benefits of exercise are it improves balance, coordination, pain modulation, decreases edema, improved trunk stability and promotes relaxation. Exercise improves metabolism, circulation and kidney function.

Fred said there is lots of hocus pocus out there. And you need to make sure you are going to a professional that understands Post Polio Syndrome. Be open to tests your Dr. may require as they may be necessary to arrive at a correct diagnosis.

Cardiac Rehab is an excellent place to start as they are constantly monitoring everything you are doing. Once you are finished with Cardiac Rehab, should you want to continue an exercise regime, there are several options available.

1. Physical Therapy with a correct evaluation.
2. Aquatic Therapy (water should be between 84 and 92 degrees.).

3. Land exercise at a local gym.
4. Home exercise.

Fred stated that two very important things are:

CONSISTENCY  
and  
GOOD FOLLOW THROUGH!

It takes 12 weeks to build up optimum strength and only 96 hours to lose it.

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Transcribed and summarized for the POLIO POST NEWS by Marilyn Berg  
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