From the Medical Director

This second issue of PET News updates you on rapidly evolving events and activities of the Weatherhead PET Center for Preventing and Reversing atherosclerosis. Associate Editor, Mary Haynie R.N, MBA has organized the layout of PET news into several features:

Heart News covers recent developments in Cardiology and at the Weatherhead PET Imaging Center.
Corner Pharmacy addresses issues and questions about medications.
HeartStar highlights an individual who has personally achieved or exceeded the goals of the program.
Living Healthy offers practical food and lifestyle tips including brand names of foods that our staff or patients enjoy eating.

Flood Update
The flood damage at the University Texas Medical School and Memorial Hermann Hospital was extensive, causing both institutions to close for a month. Included in the extensive losses were the cyclotron and the cardiac catheterization laboratories, both destroyed. The Weatherhead PET Center, including the PET scanner, computers, clinical records and database was in-operative while these institutions were closed, but not permanently damaged. Since our telephones, fax and e-mail were disabled for some time, our office was moved to my home with computers, internet cables, routers, fax machines, many cellular telephones, etc., in order to maintain clinical services and access to our clinical database. This disaster has triggered a great creative effort at the Center that has served to accelerate a number of changes, which we had previously planned for more gradual evolution.
We have obtained a commercial source of a radionuclide called Rubidium, for heart PET imaging. The Rubidium generator, which we were instrumental in developing many years ago, does not require a cyclotron and is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Consequently, the Center was fully operational for PET imaging of the heart in mid July as soon as Memorial Hermann Hospital reopened. My staff and I look forward to continuing our medical services as before and thank you for your patience and understanding.

K.Lance Gould M.D.
Martin Bucksbaum Distinguished University Chair Professor and Director, Weatherhead P.E.T. Center for Preventing and Reversing Atherosclerosis

Recent Publicity
Dr. Gould was in the national spotlight recently, featured on the cover of the Houston PBS Channel 8 Monthly Guide and on the cover of the Houston Chronicle Weekly TV Guide due to airing of To Heal A Heart, a co-production of Houston PBS and Medical Center Television, Inc. The program was narrated by Walter Cronkite and is an overview of Dr. Gould’s Reversal Program. To Heal A Heart is available on videocassette in a VHS format for $24.95 plus $5.00 shipping and handling. To order call 1-800-364-8200 or mail a check for $29.95 with your address to: Houston PBS Home Video, Attn: To Heal A Heart, 4343 Elgin, Houston, TX 77204–0008

Special Note
Our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of those lost or injured in the tragedy of September 11 in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.
Heart News

Insurance Breakthrough

One of the important, unique abilities of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is imaging blood flow patterns of the heart that identify early cholesterol build-up in the coronary arteries. PET finds early coronary artery disease before patients have any symptoms or “clinically significant” blockages. It therefore guides early treatment and lifestyle changes to prevent chest pain, heart attacks, balloon dilation or bypass surgery. Even in patients who have had one of these events, reversal treatment stabilizes the coronary arteries and dramatically reduces adverse outcomes.

For most people, this early detection has health benefits. However, it becomes a “double-edged sword” when their insurance company sees the report and puts them in the same “high risk” insurance category as patients with established coronary artery disease. Many patients have been denied life insurance or charged outrageous premiums for health insurance based on the early identification of disease or based on a pre-existing heart problem. However, in reality, they are at much lower risk than the general population because they have undertaken lifestyle modifications and treatment to prevent the problem or its recurrence unlike the majority of the U.S. population.

Finally, due to the hard work and persistence of one of our patients in the insurance business, one company has taken a bold step toward solving this problem. Jefferson Pilot Financial is offering an aggressive underwriting approach for patients who have successfully achieved the goals in our treatment program for a minimum of two years. Jefferson Pilot recognizes the importance of Dr. Gould’s vigorous preventive-reversal treatment of CAD for reducing mortality. It offers life insurance coverage at standard rates for patients who have had a coronary event after the age of 50 and have successfully completed 2 years of treatment in Dr. Gould’s reversal program and potentially lower rates of coverage for other patient categories. This coverage is offered through an independent agent and graduate of the “Gould Reversal Program”, Joe Garcia. The “business” side of medicine sometimes fails to recognize the implications of breakthroughs in medical science. Hopefully, other insurance carriers will follow suit and give patients the financial rewards they deserve for taking responsibility for their health and working hard to prevent medical problems. For more information, contact:

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Family Study

Do you have a sibling or parent with coronary heart disease? Then you probably have a 50/50 chance of developing the disease yourself, regardless of your other risk factors. From data collected at the Weatherhead PET Imaging Center, Dr. Stefano Sdringola published a study in the cardiovascular medical journal, Circulation, reporting abnormal PET scans in 50% of asymptomatic first degree relatives of patients with coronary heart disease. This study was also featured in the February 12, 2001 issue of U.S. News & World Report. Although we have known that family history is important, this study brought to light how important it really is for preventive treatment.

Corner Pharmacy

Risks and Benefits of Cholesterol Lowering Drugs

Over 30 large, well done scientific studies have proven that cholesterol lowering drugs reduce heart attacks, strokes, deaths and the need for coronary bypass surgery or balloon dilation. Other medications such as beta-blockers, aspirin, and ACE inhibitors also contribute to better outcomes. However, some people have heart attacks or die despite taking them. Some people have side effects with some drugs and a few people cannot tolerate any of these medications. Other people tolerate low doses but not high doses. There’s no way to predict who will have side effects from these medications before trying them. The same can be said for combinations of different drugs for controlling different types of lipid abnormalities.

The side effect of cerivastatin (Baycol) that led to its withdrawal from the market is called rhabdomyolysis. It is a severe inflammation and breakdown of muscles in the body. The breakdown products of the muscles circulating in the blood cause dark Coca-Cola colored urine and may clog up the kidneys causing them to fail.

All cholesterol-lowering medications may rarely cause this problem. However, for people with coronary heart disease or with high risk factors, the chance of this or other side effects is greatly outweighed by the benefits of reduced heart attacks and deaths associated with taking the

(continued on back page)
Heart Star

Al Weatherhead was gripped with fear, struggling with the news that the crunching pain between his shoulder blades after swimming on Thanksgiving Day had been a heart attack. Unfazed at the time, the fear set in only later when the heart attack was discovered on a routine EKG.

Being a successful businessman, Mr. Weatherhead tackled this new problem and his fear with full steam as he had done with other challenges in his life. He was checked by a cardiologist, had an angiogram showing his right coronary artery to be 90% blocked and his left anterior descending with a 40% blockage. Damage from the heart attack had been small but there was no guarantee that it would not happen again. This idea challenged Al. He was determined to prevent, not wait for another heart attack.

Al researched the problem and learned everything he could about heart disease. He attended Dean Ornish’s first heart retreat in California. Recognizing Al’s determination to achieve total recovery, Dr. Ornish sent him to Dr. Gould for a PET scan, now ten years ago. After meeting Dr. Gould and reviewing his first PET scan, Al learned that he could do something to prevent another heart attack, that he could actually REVERSE his heart disease.

“Reversal became my goal.” Weatherhead remembers, “Lance Gould gave me hope and set up a program of objectives and treatment to achieve that goal.” The first objective was a target weight of 160, which meant a weight loss of 12 lbs. He achieved that goal within a year and has held it for the decade.

“Next, we set targets for my cholesterol levels. For years, my total cholesterol had been 200-210, which my doctors and I had thought was good.” Now his total is 151 with an LDL of 56 and HDL of 86, consistent with cholesterol levels needed for reversal that are much lower than the standards for the general population.

For diet modifications, Dr. Gould spent time with Al, teaching him more about the available food he could eat rather than focusing on the restrictions. “My diet is heavenly!” Weatherhead exclaims, “I’ve become a careful label reader, but I’ve found that the right foods can be delicious.”

Having been a competitive swimmer for years, Al formalized his routine, now swimming 50-60 minutes a day, 5 days a week. For fun, pleasure and camaraderie, he also rides his bicycle with a group called the Western Reserve Wheelers on weekends.

From the results of his repeat PET scan two years after starting the program, Mr. Weatherhead is achieving his goal. The improvement in the PET indicates that his heart disease is reversing. He continues to follow the program, not only because he needs to but also because he enjoys it. “At 76, I’m still going to work everyday. I’m healthy, happy, productive, still contributing, and planning to work until I die. The challenges of work keep me alert and my healthy lifestyle keeps me alive.”
medications. Therefore, it is important for people with coronary heart disease or at high risk to take these medications. However, it is also important to be aware of early signs of potentially serious side effects such as severe weakness, muscle soreness, “feeling really bad”, and/or dark Coca-Cola colored urine. Then, the drug should be stopped and blood should be tested to confirm or rule out this problem.

Our program emphasizes control of lifestyle risk factors in addition to medications because neither alone is perfect. In our experience, good control of food, weight, exercise, smoking and stress augment the benefits of the drugs. Control of lifestyle risk factors also results in lower doses of medications with lower risk of side effects and better outcomes than drugs alone with continued unhealthy lifestyle.

Some people have severe cholesterol or lipid abnormalities that do not respond to one medication. They commonly respond to two or even three different medications combined with healthy lifestyle changes. However, the risk of side effects increases with combinations of medications. Physicians, pharmacists and the drug guidelines required by the FDA may advise or warn against using combined drugs due to this increased risk. On the other hand, some patients have such severe lipid abnormalities that their risk of heart attack or death is very high and can be reduced only by combining several different medications. Therefore, the benefits of multi drug treatment for such patients outweigh the risk of side effects.

Some consumer protection groups may criticize or oppose a medication with any side effects or combined drug treatment. However, this critical viewpoint may not consider or take responsibility for the much greater risk of heart attack and death due to under-treated atherosclerosis in such high-risk patients. The important concept is that any medication powerful enough to save lives may also have adverse effects in some people. Their use and associated benefits requires awareness of potential side effects and the need for healthy lifestyle in order to maximize the benefits at the lowest dose of medication having the fewest side effects.

However, following a healthy diet is actually much easier than in the past due to better knowledge and the increased availability of healthy low-fat foods. One of the keys to changing dietary habits is to keep an open mind and be willing to try new products. Stock your kitchen with healthy foods and replace some of the unhealthy foods with healthy substitutes. Remember, even though some foods are low in fat, they all have calories. So too much attention to low fat but not total calories can keep you from losing weight too. Below is an ongoing list of commercially available food products that we or some of our patients have tried and approved. If you have other products to add to this list, please send to mary.p.haynie@uth.tmc.edu or fax to Mary P. Haynie RN at (713) 500-6615.

## Summertime Food Suggestions

**Sargento Light Natural String Cheese**
(www.sargento.com) convenient to carry low fat mozzarella cheese sticks. (2.5 grams fat and 6 grams protein each)

**Soy Crisps**
-mad by Glennys (www.glennys.com) 1-888-864-1243, taste as good as potato chips. 120 calories and 10gms protein in one bag. People on Low Salt diets should take into account salt content.

**BallPark Smoked White Turkey Breast Fat-Free Franks**
more flavor than other fat-free franks. Available in most grocery stores. 6 Grams of Protein and only 45 calories.

**Healthy Choice Low Fat Ice Creams**
taste very good so be sure to stick to the 1/2 to 1 cup serving size. Available in most grocery stores.