

Heart TALK

Heart-healthy and Stroke-free Living with Dr. Amy L. Doneen, DNP, ARNP

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*Thoughts
from
Dr. Amy*

**Dr. Amy Doneen,
DNP, ARNP**

Five Easy Ways to Boost Your Heart Health This Summer

Good news from the research front: [several studies show](#) that heart attack risk is lowest in the summer, possibly because people typically exercise more in warm months, eat a lighter, healthier diet, and get more heart-protective vitamin D than they do in winter, when days are shorter.

Use these five simple, science-backed tips to keep your ticker in top condition in July--and beyond.

- 1. Move your workout outdoors.** A wonderful way to enjoy the beautiful sights and sounds of the season, while getting the exercise you need for optimal heart health, is an early morning workout, whether it's brisk walking, running, or biking. Also known as "green exercise," physical activity in natural settings has truly remarkable health benefits, ranging from lower blood pressure and a healthier heart rate to brighter moods and improved sleep, as I [recently reported](#).
- 2. Pack a jar of salad for lunch.** Here's an easy idea to celebrate the seasonal bounty of delicious fruits and veggies: Try making salad in a jar, which I highlighted in my newsletter several years ago and remains one of my summertime favorites. Later in this newsletter, you'll find a layered salad-in-a-jar recipe from

a White House chef. Simple to prepare, it's a terrific way for busy working parents like me to get a heart-healthy antioxidant boost at work or enjoy when you're on the go.

- 3. Fill your grill with fish.** Did you know that eating oily fish--such as salmon, tuna, or herring--twice a week, as recommended by the American Heart Association, cuts risk for fatal heart disease by 36%? Rich in omega-3 fatty acids and low in calories, grilled fish--seasoned with a savory spice rub--is an easy, delicious choice for July cookouts. Toss a few skewers of cubed vegetables on the grill as well and you'll have a perfect summer cookout to enjoy with family and friends.

- 4. Hydrate!** As the mercury climbs, it's essential to drink enough water (eight or more glasses daily). Not only does that prevent dehydration, but it can also help you maintain a healthy weight, according to a [new study of nearly 10,000 people](#). The researchers found that people who are inadequately hydrated are more likely to be overweight than those who drank ample water and ate fruits and veggies with high water content, such as cucumbers, Bell peppers, celery and apples. Not only do these healthy foods fill you up, but they're also low in calories. That's a win all around!

- 5. Take a vacation!** An annual getaway could add years to your life, a [recent study](#) suggests. The researchers tracked middle-aged men at high risk for coronary heart disease (CHD) for 9 years. Those who vacationed at least once a year had a 32% lower risk for CHD, including heart attacks, and were 29% less likely to die from cardiac causes, even when other factors were taken into account. That's powerful motivation to take off from work, kick back and relax this summer!

*To Your Health
~ Dr. Amy*

Peer-Reviewed Study:

Bale Doneen Method Halts Cardiovascular Disease & Shrinks Arterial Plaque

A new peer-reviewed study of my patients at the Heart Attack & Stroke Prevention Center in Spokane, Washington shows that the patented [Bale Doneen Method](#), which I co-founded with Dr. Bradley Bale, is remarkably effective at treating, halting and preventing cardiovascular disease (CVD), the leading killer of Americans.

The research, which will soon be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Archives of Medical Science*, found that our comprehensive, science-based CVD treatment shrank the size of plaque in the neck arteries by 52.7% over a two-year period. The study included 324 HASPC patients, whose response to treatment was analyzed by scientists from Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for Prevention of Heart Disease, Dr. Bale, and me.

Our study used carotid intima media thickness (cIMT), [the painless 15-minute ultrasound test I discussed in my May newsletter](#), to evaluate the effect of the Bale Doneen Method on plaque in the neck's largest arteries, the carotids. This FDA-approved screening can detect hidden risk for heart attack and stroke in seemingly healthy people, allowing them to get early treatment to avoid these events.

All of the patients in the study received extensive behavioral, dietary and lifestyle counseling, which is one of the cornerstones of the Bale Doneen Method. They also were treated with medications and supplements to lower their

Follow the HASPC on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for the latest news on heart health and wellness.



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cholesterol. Those with CVD and/or high blood pressure received additional personalized therapies, which are described more fully in our book, [Beat the Heart Attack Gene](#).

Dramatic Improvements During First Year of Treatment

Our individualized medical management of these patients not only decreased plaque in the neck arteries, but also significantly improved cholesterol levels and blood pressure, with the following outcomes during the first year of treatment:

- A 50% decrease in lipid-rich arterial plaque (the most dangerous kind)
- A 43% rise in calcified plaque (the stable form that does NOT cause heart attack and stroke)
- A 25% drop in LDL (bad) cholesterol
- A 31% drop in triglycerides
- A 6% rise in heart-protective HDL (good) cholesterol
- A 5% decrease in systolic blood pressure (the top number in the reading)

These trends continued in the second year of treatment and beyond. Our new findings add to our 2014 peer-reviewed 8-year study of our patients, published in *Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, highlighting the effectiveness of the Bale Doneen Method, which has been adopted by hundreds of leading-edge heart attack and stroke prevention centers all over the world.

The earlier study found significant improvement in cIMT measurements that may lower patients' risk for heart attack and stroke, along with positive effects on levels of cholesterol and inflammation -- the

dangerous duo that lead to plaque buildup in the arteries and increased risk for cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and strokes.

A New Strategy to Save Lives -- and Hearts

What's new, exciting and important about these studies is that they offer scientific evidence that our unique approach to heart attack and stroke prevention works. One of our key goals is transform the current standard of care, which is based on checking patients for certain CVD risk factors, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.

If none of these factors are found, the patient is assumed to be "innocent" of CVD, which often has no symptoms until it becomes severe enough to trigger a heart attack or stroke. The Bale Doneen Method takes the opposite approach: We assume all patients -- regardless of their risk factors -- are "guilty" of harboring deadly arterial disease until proven innocent by widely available lab and imaging tests, such as cIMT.

If we detect early signs of CVD -- or our tests reveal a patient is at risk for developing it -- we use comprehensive, personalized therapies to optimize arterial wellness, ranging from lifestyle changes to medications, supplements and an individualized diet based on the patient's DNA. In my next newsletter, I'll take a closer look at the nine foundational elements of the Bale Doneen Method and how each of them can help save your life and heart.

To learn more about our method, please visit [our new website](#). Also check out [our videos on YouTube](#), including our recent webinar with Dr. Joel Kahn, "[The Miracle of Heart Disease Reversal](#)," and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest news and science on heart attack and stroke prevention.

Pass this newsletter along to others who may find it helpful.



Must-Have Kale Salad to Go

Here's a tasty recipe, created by a White House chef, to take to work for a heart-healthy lunch on the go. Experiment with other ingredients too--there are dozens of recipes for salads in a jar, which I often bring to the office for my midday meal. Makes 4 servings, to be packed in individual 1-quart Mason jars with lids.

For the Salad

- 1 bunch kale, washed and spun dry
- 1/4 small purple cabbage, shredded, washed and spun dry
- 1 small carrot, peeled and shaved
- 1 small fennel, sliced thin
- 1 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup shaved Parmesan cheese
- 1 Serrano pepper, sliced thinly

For the Dressing

- 2 lemons, zest and juice
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 shallot, finely minced
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 4 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

For Garbanzo Bean Crouton Garnish

- 1 can garbanzo beans, drained
- 1 tbsp. curry spice mix

Preparation

In small bowl, whisk lemon juice, zest, garlic, shallots, honey, and vinegar. Add olive oil slowly and season with salt and pepper. Pour into the bottom of the four Mason jars equally.

For salad, put 1/4 of the kale strips in each jar on top of the dressing. Divide shredded cabbage equally for the next layer, followed by the carrots and fennel. Top each salad jar with pumpkin seeds, cranberries, Parmesan cheese, and Serrano peppers. Close lids tightly and refrigerate until use.

Garbanzo bean croutons can be packed separately to maintain texture. Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread garbanzo beans on a cookie sheet. Roast until dry and crispy, about an hour. Toss in the spice and store in a covered container. When ready to eat the salad, shake the jar and place contents in a salad bowl. Top with crunchy garbanzo croutons and enjoy! Adapted from [letsmove.gov](#).