

Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

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“Heart Fun Facts”

According to the American Heart Association, more than 15 million people have heart disease and it is the leading cause of death in the United States. Thank God for a healthy heart because all of our cells require a constant supply of oxygen and if blood flow stops, the cells will die. We have all read the terrifying illnesses that can affect the heart. So, let's discuss some of the fun facts concerning the human heart, as recently presented by the Cleveland Clinic. The number of heart attacks peaks on Christmas Day, followed by December 26th and New Year's. Heart disease has been found in 3,000-year-old mummies. The first “study” showing benefits of a vegetarian diet appears in the Bible's Book of Daniel (600 BCE). The blue whale has the largest heart, which can weigh over 1,500 pounds. The first heart cell starts to beat as early as 4 weeks and it beats about 100,000 times a day. The heart has its own electrical supply and will continue to beat when separated from the body. Each minute, your heart pumps 1.5 gallons of blood. Every cell in the body gets blood from the heart, except for the corneas of the eyes. The first heart pacemakers plugged into a wall socket. A normal heart valve is about the size of a half dollar. The beating sound of the heart is the clap of valve leaflets opening and closing. Your heart is about the size of your two hands clasped together. Your heart is a coordinated machine. The right-side pumps blood into your lungs, while the left side pumps it back throughout your body. Modesty prompted the invention of the stethoscope. Before it existed, doctors had to press their ears directly to each patient's chest. A woman's average heartbeat is faster than a man's by almost 8 beats a minute. Heart cancer is very rare, because heart cells stop dividing early in life. Happiness and a strong sense of emotional vitality helps lower your risk of heart disease. And, the more education you have, the lower your risk of heart disease. Although you rarely think about it, your heart continues to pump faithfully, around the clock, year to year.

In the America that I love, we know that heart disease is your greatest health threat and is a greater danger than breast cancer in women and prostate cancer in men. Regular exercise is the single most important key to heart health. You control your heart health through diet, exercise and managing stress. Celebrities who have had open heart surgery in recent years include David Letterman, Bill Clinton, Barbara Walters, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Regis Philbin. Please take good care of your miraculous heart.

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