What is Preventive Cardiology?

- Early identification of heart disease risk
- Prioritizing lifestyle change as the primary way to reduce risk
- Careful selection of medical therapies – do the benefits really outweigh the risks?
- Taking a broad view – strategies that work for the patients and the population
- **Effective communication of health information**
Why Are the Simple Questions Sometimes the Hardest to Answer?

- Lack of data
- Conflicting data from multiple different media streams (lay press, peer reviewed, etc)
- We make assumptions – “it is obvious” or “everybody knows that…”
- Sometimes we are uncomfortable talking about everyday issues (“non-medical”)

Why Is This A Problem?

- Sometimes these are the things many patients care the most about
- Opportunity lost – what we say can genuinely change behavior
- Can make doctors seem distant – “they are only when I’m really sick”
- Sometimes not saying anything can be an endorsement of patient behaviors
Goals of My (Former) Heart-Smart Living Blog

1. Answers the questions **people** really want to know about preventing heart disease
2. Emphasize lifestyle, not medications
3. Dispel rumors and misinformation about supplements and other therapies
4. Make scientific guidelines more accessible to lay readers

USDA vs. Mediterranean Dietary Recommendations
Coffee: Friend of Foe?

Evidence and Take Home Message

- Coffee probably not harmful in small doses --- and may be heart healthy
- Coffee can be included as part of a healthy diet for the public and patients with increased CV risk or CV disease (JACC)
- Positive association between heavy coffee consumption (≥ 4 cups/day) and all-cause mortality in men and women <55 (Mayo study)
- Avoid coffee + tobacco

Breakfast: The most controversial meal of the day: Yahoo Blog
**Breakfast: Evidence and Take Home Message**

Eating breakfast was associated with metabolic health and with significantly lower CHD risk in male cohort (Harvard study).

When skipping breakfast does not lead to overconsumption at lunch or later meals, may be an effective occasional strategy for reducing total daily energy intake (Cornell study).

Key – what is the effect of breakfast on overall energy intake.

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**E-cigs: Their popularity exceeds our knowledge: Yahoo Blog**

E-cig use by smokers was not followed by greater rates of quitting or consumption 1 year later (JAMA).

Use of e-cigs was associated with higher odds of ever or current cigarette smoking – e-cigs do not discourage, and may encourage, conventional cigarette use among adolescents (JAMA Pediatr).

Cautious use in select patients for smoking cessation.
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April 7, 2015
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Are multivitamins a waste of money?: Yahoo Blog

Are Multivitamins a Waste of Money?
By Michael J. Blaha, MD, MPH
Jan 23, 2015

Health Blogs Yahoo

Heart-Smart Living
by Michael J. Blaha, MD, MPH

Evidence and Take Home Message

- No clear evidence of a beneficial effect of supplements on all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease, or cancer
- Multivitamins, B vitamins, and vitamins E & C showed no improvements in cognitive function
- In fact, many trials have shown that beta-carotene and vitamin E supplementation increase mortality
- Healthy diet!
Statins and the Brain: Yahoo Blog

Statins and the Brain: A Conversation with Drs. Seth Martin and Kristopher Swiger

Evidence and Take Home Message

Statins and Cognition: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Short- and Long-term Cognitive Effects

Eat Your Omega-3s!: Yahoo Blog

Eat Your Omega-3s!

Many people take fish oil capsules—the scientific term is omega-3 fatty acid supplementation—because they believe they have heart health benefits. However, a recent scientific article that made national headlines questioned the use of such supplements, given their lack of evidence for effectiveness. Do I recommend them for my patients? The answer is yes.

Omega-3s are essential for Good Health

Eat Your Omega-3s are crucial for maintaining the health of our hearts, for balancing the oils that cause heart attacks and strokes, for lowering blood triglycerides, and for reducing inflammation.

Statins and Cognition: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Short- and Long-term Cognitive Effects

• Short term trials did not show a consistent effect of statin therapy on cognitive endpoints
• HOWEVER, long term data may support a beneficial role of statins in the prevention of dementia
• Handle patient concerns like you would for statin-induced muscle aches, consider statin holiday

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**Eat Your Omega-3s! Evidence and Take Home Message**

**Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Cardiovascular Disease**

Effects on Risk Factors, Molecular Pathways, and Clinical Events

Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, DrPH,†‡ Jason H. Y. Wu, PhD

Boston, Massachusetts, and Perth, Australia

• Omega-3 FA consumption as part of a healthy diet improves vascular and cardiac hemodynamics, triglycerides, and probably inflammation and thrombosis
• However, supplement trials very disappointing
• Eat your omega-3s, supplement ONLY if a patient is at high risk for heart disease & cannot follow a healthy diet

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**The Word on Diet Sweeteners: Yahoo Blog**

**Diet Sweeteners – The Official Word on Heart Health**

By Michael J. Buna, MD, MSc

Heart-Smart Living

Heart Disease is the number one killer, and it's especially true for African-Americans. But African-Americans are also the people who are most likely to use diet sweeteners, which may be linked to heart disease.

Only recently has there been enough evidence to make a "scientific statement". On July 9th, the AHA and the ADA released a joint statement cautiously recommending "non-nutritive sweeteners" – like aspartame (NutraSweet) and sucralose (Splenda) – as replacements for sugar in diet drinks.
Diet Sweeteners
Evidence and Take Home Message

**AHA/ADA Scientific Statement**

Nonnutritive Sweeteners: Current Use and Health Perspectives
A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association

- No conclusive evidence whether NNS affect appetite, energy balance, body weight, or cardiometabolic risk factors
- However, NNS used in a structured diet to replace added sugars may lead to modest energy intake reductions and weight loss
- Use as a gateway to water – don’t lose your taste for water!

Summary – Addressing the Simple Questions Patients Ask

- We should strive to improve talking about these simple questions with our patients – or someone else will!
- Incredible opportunity to influence health
- Don’t ignore other pills people take – misinformation might interfere with adherence!
- Find a way to follow lay health stories
  - Ex: ACC News Digest, Twitter, NYT Health
- Look for my new blog to be renewed under the Johns Hopkins name, Twitter @MichaelJBlaha

Summary – Take Home Points

- **Diet** – Mediterranean Diet
- **Coffee** – May be healthy
- **Breakfast** – Don’t skip if calorie neutral
- **E-Cigs** – Be very cautious!
- **Physical Activity** – Stress reduce sitting and fitness over fatness
- **Multivitamins** – Discourage routine use
- **Statins** – No cognitive concerns
- **Diet Sweeteners** – Official OK as gateway to water