

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Aortic Stenosis**
- **Drug Interactions**
- **Ranch Dressing**
- **High Blood Pressure**

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What is Aortic Stenosis?

What is aortic stenosis? As we discussed last week, there are four valves in the heart which open and close with each heart beat. The aortic valve is the last valve the blood goes thru before it leaves the heart to be pumped to the rest of the body. In some people, this valve becomes too narrow (or stenosed) which makes it difficult for blood to leave the heart. So what causes aortic stenosis? Aortic stenosis is commonly caused by calcification of the valve. This is usually a degenerative or aging issue. Secondly, it can be caused by rheumatic fever. Thirdly, an individual can be born with two leaflets on the valve instead of three. This is called a bicuspid valve and tends to become stenosed

earlier than a normal valve. Lastly, there is a congenital form of aortic stenosis which



can present in infancy or childhood. So what are the symptoms of aortic stenosis? Common symptoms include shortness of breath with exertion, chest pain, passing out or near passing out, swelling, and just an overall

sense of decreased exercise tolerance. Some individuals may present with abnormal rhythms such as atrial fibrillation. Severe aortic stenosis can lead to sudden death if not treated. Diagnoses of aortic stenosis can usually be made during a physical exam. The diagnosis is then confirmed with an echocardiogram (an ultrasound of the heart). Ultimately, before the valve is fixed, a cardiac catheterization is done to see if there is any blockages in the arteries before going for surgery. In some cases, a MRI or CT scan of the heart and chest may also be needed. So how is the valve fixed? In children, an aortic valvotomy may be completed when the valve stenosis is severe. This can be done in a less invasive way with a catheter. A balloon is used to gently open the valve. A more permanent way is open heart surgery. (1, 2).

Tip of the Month

How to help avoid drug interactions:

1. Keep a list of your medications updated and bring to every doctor's appointment (include over the counter and supplement drugs).
2. Use the same pharmacy so they can notify you of drug to drug interactions.
3. Ask your health care provider before starting any new medications or herbal supplements.
4. Read the insert that comes with the medication (it will tell you most of the interactions).
5. Try to avoid grapefruit if you are on medications. This is generally the safest rule.
6. Remember we use some drug to drug interactions to our benefit so do not stop a medication without first checking with your health care provider. (5).



Ranch Dressing



Recipe from the book
Breaking the Salt Habit
by Erik Williams. Buy a
copy of his book at our
website

www.myhearhelp.com
and click on store!

Ingredients:

1/2 cup skim milk
1/2 TB lemon juice
1/2 cup light mayo
1/3 cup light sour cream
1/2 tsp vegetable oil
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp dried chives
1/2 tsp dried parsley
1/2 tsp dill weed
1/2 tsp onion powder
Pinch of black pepper

Directions:

1. Combine milk and lemon juice in a small bowl.
2. Let stand 10 minutes.
3. In another bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients.
4. Add milk and lemon juice to the mixture.
5. Refrigerate to store.

Yields 12 servings

Health Information

Serving size 1 TB
Servings 12
Calories 43
Total fat <4g
Cholesterol 2mg
Sodium 51 mg
Total fiber 0 g
Protein <1 g
Carbohydrates 2 g
Potassium 22 mg
Sugar <1g

Quote of the Month: “To preserve health is a moral and religious duty, for health is the basis of all social duties. We can no longer be useful when we are not well” Samuel Jackson.

Bible Verse of the Month: “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Did you Know?

Did you know that high blood pressure can cause extensive damage to your body without you ever feeling it? That is why it is called the silent killer. High blood pressure is very common and affects over one billion people worldwide. It increases the risk to have a stroke, heart attack, heart failure, peripheral arterial disease, atrial fibrillation, and aortic dissection. The higher pressure can gradually cause damage to the blood vessels in the body. This eventually leads to damage of the organs such as the heart, kidneys, and eyes. Aside from diabetes, high blood pressure is the second leading cause of kidney failure. This is why it is so important to have, at a minimum, yearly screenings with a health care provider in which the blood pressure is taken and labs are completed.

So what can be done to help prevent the damage from high blood pressure? There are many lifestyle changes that can be done to lower blood pressure. Quitting smoking is first on the list. Smoking tends to raise the blood pressure 10-20mmHG after each cigarette. Losing weight and maintaining the weight in a normal range can cause a 5-20mmHG drop in blood pressure. Decreasing sodium intake to 2300mg or less per day can lower the blood pressure another 2-8 mmHg. Exercising for 30 minutes most days of the week usually results in a 4-9mmHg drop in blood pressure. Limiting alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men is also important. Certainly take any medication that has been prescribed. (4).





During the surgery, an incision is made in the valve to help open it and then the leaflets of the valve are shaved if needed to help improve blood flow. In all adults, aortic valve replacement is recommended in all symptomatic individuals who have severe aortic stenosis. Surgical AVR is the treatment of choice unless a patient is too high risk to undergo the traditional method of surgery. In this case, a percutaneous aortic valve replacement may be done. This procedure is (for the most part) catheter based. There are multiple approaches that can be taken with this procedure but the majority of the time the valve is placed thru the femoral artery in the groin. This procedure does not come without potential complications, which may include a stroke, complication of the artery, heart attack, heart failure, needing a pacemaker, renal failure and death. However, this is a viable option now for individuals that are too high risk to undergo traditional aortic valve replacement. This procedure is not offered at every hospital and it is important that you go to a center that is very experienced with this procedure to help limit complications. (1, 2, 3).