



Research looks into what makes tiny hearts tick

RESEARCH INTO THE CARDIOVASCULAR FUNCTION OF PREMATURE BABIES HAS FOUND THAT A DRUG, PREVIOUSLY ONLY USED ON ADULTS TO IMPROVE BLOOD FLOW, CAN ALSO BE SAFELY ADMINISTERED TO PREMATURE INFANTS.



■ Main picture: Hand on hearts – Dr Martin Kluckow with one of his young patients.

The research, which is funded by the North Shore Heart Research Foundation (NSHRF), is the first of its kind in the world and is investigating how to prevent brain injury of premature babies by improving their heart function.

“Of babies born too early, before 29 weeks of pregnancy, brain injury is the primary cause of long term disability,” says Royal North Shore Hospital neonatologist Dr Martin Kluckow, who is leading the project along with researchers at Sydney’s RPA Women’s and Babies Centre.

“That occurrence has changed little... despite rapid improvements in our care of these fragile babies.”

Current standard medical practice for treating premature babies is to monitor their blood pressure, and those with low blood pressure are given drugs to improve the pumping power of the heart.

However, research done by Dr Kluckow has shown that blood pressure does not accurately diagnose low blood flow. Similarly the drugs that are currently used to try to improve blood flow, do not work in about 40 percent of preterm babies.

Dr Kluckow has been testing the use of a drug called Milrinone – typically used to improve cardiac function in older children and adults, but has never been used on premature babies.

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heart recipe



■ Ray Knight, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

With heart disease being the single biggest killer in Australia, communicating the benefits of heart research might seem an easy task.

About 36 percent of all deaths in Australia can be attributed to heart disease.

Convincing people, however, to financially support North Shore Heart Research Foundation so we can fund more research can be more difficult.

All financial support to North Shore Heart Research Foundation provides opportunities for talented researchers. In the February 2007 issue of *Take Heart*, we showcased the PhD students and scientists who were awarded more than \$500,000 in grants this year. We were indeed honoured to have the Minister for Science and Medical Research Verity Firth join us to present these awards on 30 April.

The long-time commitment of The Mill House Foundation to support our researchers was also highlighted at a recent visit to the New Born Care Centre by Mrs Dorothy Cornock, Mrs Denise O'Gorman and Simone O'Gorman when a new ultrasound machine was presented to support the work of neonatologist, Dr Martin Kluckow.

Our corporate supporters – Partners in Heart Health – are an ever-growing list and we welcome new partners, Boston Scientific, Medtronic, St Jude Medical, Roche and Servier Laboratories.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to another very special group... our volunteers. In May, Australia celebrated National Volunteer Week. That event created a focal point for us to pause and recognise those who participate in volunteering and the value they bring to help us raise funds for research.

This issue is brimming with articles and stories that I hope you find useful and informative. Should you be reading about our work for the first time, I hope you will consider joining our community of supporters and make a donation to our work on the form at the back of this newsletter.

Happy Reading!

RAY KNIGHT
CHAIRMAN

Disclaimer: Whilst due care is taken in the preparation of articles, the information contained in this newsletter is not intended as specific medical advice, and should be used as a guide only. Consult your doctor or health care professional before following any health information.

DIARY



DIARY DATES

Diet and Exercise Forum

Fun and knowledge about healthy living. All welcome. Gold coin donation
**Centenary Lecture Theatre
Royal North Shore Hospital**
9.30am to 12.30pm. Saturday July 14.

Women's Heart Health Lunch

Two course lunch with heart health information. \$85 per person.
Hunters Hill Club
Noon to 3pm. Friday, October 19.

Yaris Lottery Prize Draw

Sponsored by Bill Buckle
Friday, September 14.

Cardiology Information Seminar

Fun and knowledge about healthy living. All welcome.
Tickets \$15 per person.
North Sydney Leagues Club
9.30am – Noon. Saturday, November 3.

BOOKINGS AND ENQUIRES

events@heartresearch.com.au
1800 999 060



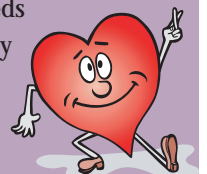
■ The Mill House Foundation gives again – Dorothy Cornock, founder of The Mill House Foundation, with her grand daughter Simone O'Gorman.



■ Volunteer Elizabeth Hilton is one from a group of regular volunteers who was recognised during Volunteer Week.

TAKE HEART lottery winner announced

Congratulations to **Dr Kathleen Thomas**, from the NSW Central Coast who has won the latest *Take Heart* Lottery 0207 with ticket number 10571 – a second win. She is taking home the Ord Minnett "Healthy Heart and Healthy Wallet" \$20,000 share portfolio. Dr Thomas can add this to the other share portfolio she won in 2003. A big hearty thank you to all those who supported us by buying a lottery ticket. Net proceeds raised through the lottery go towards research and the fight to combat heart disease.





UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

DR KARIN CHIA - NSHRF RESEARCHER

In April this year Dr Karin Chia was one of five researchers awarded the NSHRF research grants. It was a prestigious accolade for this young and active PhD student, who is completing her studies at Sydney University.

Dr Chia is researching the role of certain enzymes and possible biochemical influences that could improve the treatment of heart failure.

Q: *My Mother always told me to...*
count my blessings

Q: *I wish I had...* a personal assistant

Q: *I wish I hadn't...* eaten all the chocolates

Q: *I'm very bad at...* remembering birthdays

Q: *My proudest achievement is...*
yet to come

Q: *When I was a child I wanted to be...*
an Astronaut

Q: *If only I could...* teleport myself

Q: *What I don't find amusing is...*
those who take advantage of others

Q: *My happiest moments are ...* those that involve good people eating good food that has preferably been cooked by myself

Q: *If I wasn't me I'd like to be ...*
someone who is still content. Can I be Neil Armstrong meets Martha Stewart without the insider trading?

Q: *Medical research is important because ...*
it throws up new ideas while debunking some of the previously held dogma that may be dangerously erroneous

Q: *The hardest thing about being a scientist is...*
tempering one's excitement and disappointment

Imagination breeds change in heart research

IMAGINATION, SAYS PROFESSOR HELGE RASMUSSEN, IS THE PREREQUISITE FOR ANY TALENTED SCIENTIST.

"It is more important than knowledge," he says. "Science is the truth – and the only way to get closer to the truth is through imagination."

Speaking before friends, colleagues and benefactors, Prof. Helge Rasmussen was being honoured for his commitment to push the boundaries of what we know.

He, along with four other talented scientists, was awarded a 2007 North Shore Heart Research Foundation grant during a special ceremony at North Shore Hospital in April.

The Minister for Science and Research, the Hon. Verity Firth MP, paid tribute to their achievement by distributing more than \$500 000 in funding to this year's recipients.

Joining Prof. Rasmussen on stage was his colleague Dr Gemma Figtree – a talented and dynamic scientist, and another of this year's grant winners.



■ Royal North Shore Hospital cardiologist, Professor Helge Rasmussen, a leading researcher and one of the recipients of the latest grant awards.

The support of the Foundation has meant they can employ a full-time research assistant to support their investigations into the way certain drugs change the way the heart contracts.

"It is an absolute honour to work with such incredibly talented people in a field of science that is exciting and meaningful," said Dr Figtree upon collecting her award. "We can only do this work with the support of the NSHRF and for that I am so grateful."

Other researchers who have been awarded grants include PhD students Melanie Murrell, Jason Seow and Dr Karin Chia. The money they receive will fund

several research projects investigating new techniques into treating and preventing coronary artery disease and heart failure.

"Helping students initiate careers in cardiovascular health by providing research assistance and training is an investment in future life saving," says Royal North Shore Hospital's Head of Cardiology, Dr John Gunning. ■



■ Minister for Science and Research Hon. Verity Firth MP (bottom left) with the 2007 recipients of NSHRF grants.

Looking into the future

The Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) Newborn Care Centre is the owner of a new ultrasound machine, thanks once again to the generosity of The Mill House Foundation.

Mrs Dorothy Cornock, of The Mill House Foundation, officially presented the machine to neonatologist Dr Martin Kluckow.

The ultrasound machine will be used to monitor babies during the first hours of life, by allowing doctors to measure cardiac function at the bedside.

The Mill House Foundation is a long standing supporter of the North Shore Heart Research Foundation, which is currently funding research trials being lead by Dr Kluckow. ■



■ L-R: Simone O’Gorman, Denise O’Gorman, Dr Martin Kluckow and Mrs Dorothy Cornock, who with her late husband Harold Cornock, founded The Mill House Foundation.

continued from page 1

“Over a four-year period, we recruited 90 babies and monitored the effect of Milrinone with continuous measurement of blood pressure and ultrasound measures of blood flow,” Dr Kluckow said.

“We found that when Milrinone was safely administered to our smallest babies it had a variable effect on blood flow. With some babies it improved the blood flow and in others it made little difference,” he said.

“Encouragingly we found during this trial the incidence of low blood flow decreased from 35 percent of babies to 18 percent of babies,” he said. “This improvement was probably explained by overall changes in newborn intensive care and the increased attention to this area of health due to our research. Hopefully it will translate into less brain injury in the future.”

Dr Kluckow said further research is needed to try and solve the problem of inadequate heart function in premature babies. New trials are in the pipeline to assess whether other interventions would be more effective.

“We are still one of the only groups in the world studying premature babies so early in their lives and have an active role in education of doctors internationally in our skills and techniques,” he said.

The NSHRF has been supporting Dr Kluckow’s research at both the RNSH and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for more than nine years and has helped provide him with a full time research assistant, equipment and assays of drug levels. Most recently, the Foundation donated a state-of-the-art ultrasound machine to enable bedside assessment of sick premature babies, made possible through the generous support of The Mill House Foundation. ■

4 great reasons to visit Bill Buckle.

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Ask the Doctor by Prof. Geoffrey Tofler

Q: I have a pacemaker and am concerned about a recent article that iPods can impair pacemaker function. What is your advice?

A: Although pacemakers and new devices such as implantable defibrillators (ICD's) have provided a major benefit for cardiac patients, questions do arise. The functions of the pacemaker and defibrillator are controlled by electrically sensing the heart beats and when indicated causing their own electrical firing. There is a low possibility that strong electrical or electro-magnetic impulses could temporarily affect the device functioning, or even have some more permanent effect.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) could theoretically cause the device to heat up, could make it vibrate abnormally or have some electrical inhibition. Devices like iPods, MP3 players, or passing through a security screen could also deliver an electromagnetic impulse.

So what are the individual risks to a person, and what can one do?

The risk of devices such as mobile phones and iPods is very low but not zero. To minimise the risk, people using mobile phones should put the phone to their ear on the opposite side to the device, and not carry iPods or mobile phones over the device. Security screens are a low risk, however people with pacemakers and ICDs,

should inform the security staff and show their device identification card beforehand.

MRI's are more of a concern, both in terms of potential risk and the difficulty in adequately monitoring a patient during the procedure. In the absence of clear information, patients with pacemakers or ICD devices should avoid MRI scans as a general rule. If there are no other alternatives, scans may be done under close supervision after cardiac consultation. After the scan, the device should be checked for its function.

Doctors and physicists have been aware of this potential problem for many years, and pacemaker and ICD devices are designed to be increasingly resistant to any potential interference. If you do have a pacemaker or ICD device, it is important to discuss your particular device and clinical condition with your doctor, and obtain specific information and recommendations for you. Regular check-ups are always needed to ensure that the device is functioning well.

We welcome your questions via email to information@heartresearch.com.au or by post to PO Box 543, St Leonards, NSW 1590.

We recommend each person receives their own advice on their particular condition from their doctor, but as we answer a question or two each issue we hope to cover areas of interest and new developments for our readers. ■



■ iPods pose a very small risk to the function of an ICD.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY

North Shore Heart Research Foundation would like to thank all benefactors who generously donated money over the past year to the Foundation.

Your thoughtful contributions have helped fund many important projects including the cardiac rehabilitation program at Australia's leading North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre.

The facility educates people about living with heart disease, and provides them with life-changing skills to help them get back on their feet.

3,500 cardiac patients and heart attack survivors benefited from the programs provided by the NSCEC last year.

"On the one hand, this program saves and improves lives, no question," says Dr John Gunning, Head of Cardiology at Royal North Shore Hospital.

"On the other hand, by keeping its clients from going back to hospital, it frees up precious hospital resources. Your support dollar couldn't be more effectively spent." ■

If you would like to make a donation to the North Shore Heart Research Foundation, please telephone 1800 999 060.

A reminder that donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

Bowlers hit the greens for heart research

TWENTY-SIX TEAMS FROM AROUND NORTHERN SYDNEY FLOCKED TO BELROSE BOWLING CLUB IN APRIL TO TAKE PART IN THE 10TH ANNUAL PROBUS BOWLS CHALLENGE.

The event was a success with 78 players raising more than \$1000 for the North Shore Heart Research Foundation.

■ Bowlers celebrate after a successful tournament.



“This particular event is the longest running annual event that we arrange and it is gratifying that so many different Probus Clubs have been involved from the beginning,” says the Foundation’s Development Officer, Danielle Hielman.

“The atmosphere, greens and the staff of the Belrose Bowling Club were all a real pleasure to work with.”

Special thanks to Perry Arundell and Ross Selvage from Forestville Probus and Belrose Bowling Club who generously donated the green fees and Pat Sinclair for baking the ‘Heart Healthy’ fruit slices served on the day.■

If your Probus Club would like to join us in 2008, call Danielle Hielman on 9926 8319.

PARTNERS IN HEART HEALTH

North Shore Heart Research Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions of our corporate supporters in 2007



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Super Help

North Shore Heart Research Foundation donors were given a golden opportunity in March to take stock of their finances, after leading wealth management company Ord Minnett hosted two free seminars on upcoming superannuation reforms.

People attending the information seminar were advised how best to take advantage of the looming 'once in a lifetime' superannuation changes.

"This is an incredibly generous gift by our sponsor Ord Minnett," said NSHRF CEO Derek Minnett. "Not only have they continued to support the NSHRF, but they are also providing real benefits to our supporters."

The seminar is the first of many initiatives offered to NSHRF by Ord Minnett, who this year announced an increased commitment to the foundation both in fundraising as well as providing benefits to supporters.

"The work done by the NSHRF is crucial to the community in which we live, it is important that the corporate sector supports them in their cause," said CEO and Managing Director of Ord Minnett, Karl Morris. ■



■ CEO Derek Minnett with investment and superannuation advisors Fran Buckle and Mark Tindale from Ord Minnett.

Enjoying all things French

Frank Jefferies was more than surprised when he received a call from the North Shore Heart Research Foundation last December.

"I initially thought, 'hello what's gone wrong,'" he said.

The news, however, was only good for Mr Jefferies, who was told he would soon be enjoying an amazing holiday in France after winning the *Take Heart Lottery*.

"I was so delighted. I have never won anything like this before" he said. "I like to go into the lottery from time to time, to give something back – to say thank you."

Mark Swift Managing Director of The Global Connection said, "Mr Jefferies was a very appreciative winner and a terrific person to deal with. In fact we really had fun organising the whole trip!"

Winning a return flight to Paris, Mr Jefferies will see some of the best of France while on a tour through Provence and will have \$2,500 in travel cheques to spend. Also included in the prize are two luxurious travel packs courtesy of L'Occitane. *Bon voyage!* ■



■ Lottery Winner Frank Jefferies with Mark Swift from Global Connection.

Would you like to quit smoking?

North Shore Heart Research Foundation investigators are trialling a new non-drug method of quitting smoking. If you have tried to quit before, but have not succeeded, you can find out more about our study by calling (02) 9926 8677.



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Apart from the investment in the very best research staff, the pursuit of quality medicines involves a significant financial commitment to biomedical research. Locally, Pfizer Australia has committed over AUD\$184 million to Australian research and development activities up to June 2009 – including \$50 million on discovery research.

The company has also committed more than AUD\$30 million to over 55 early-stage discovery research collaborations. Each year it provides more than \$3 million in competitive biomedical research grants and fellowships, supporting a new generation of Australian researchers.

Pfizer Australia is proud to help people all over the world live longer, happier lives.

For more information, visit www.pfizeraustralia.com.au ■

The gift that never stops giving

North Shore Heart Research Foundation is one of Australia's leading health research charities – relying substantially on the generous support of our community for donations.

Bequests continue to provide much needed support for our key researchers and students – well beyond the lifetime of our farsighted benefactors. Funds are used to provide PhD student scholarships and a wide variety of

research projects that will increase our understanding and improving treatment of heart disease – not only to benefit patients today but for future generations.

Making or changing your Will to include a bequest to North Shore Heart Research Foundation need not be complicated. However, we do recommend that you seek legal advice to ensure that your intentions can be honoured.

For more information about providing a bequest to NSHRF in your Will, and to receive a copy of our brochure *We have the will to beat heart disease* – please call CEO, Derek Minett, for a confidential discussion on 02 9926 8319

Welcome to the Winter Edition

On behalf of the North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre I would like to add my sincere thanks to all of those generous donors who contributed to the recent NSHRF appeal.

The NSCEC service relies in no small part on the financial support of the Foundation. Through their support we have become a nationally recognised centre of excellence.

This has enabled us to develop programs for specific patient needs, including exercise sessions for clients with diabetes, quarterly educational sessions for those living with an ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator) and our newly established pilot program for those living with obesity, the Weight Management Program.

On 28 November 2006 the Centre was again honoured with a generous donation from the

RNSH Floral and Services Committee. Our staff and patients are grateful to the many committed volunteers whose efforts have allowed us to buy equipment that would otherwise be impossible. This year we have purchased a much needed second treadmill and two oximeters. The oximeters (oxygen and heart rate measuring devices) will help the staff monitor more closely our more debilitated patients while exercising. This enables the staff to monitor more accurately the effects of exercise on our patients with exercise limitations.

While on the topic of volunteers we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a truly wonderful association we have had with one of our own volunteers, Mr Tom Brown. Tom has generously contributed his time and efforts to the Centre for nearly 10 years. He is one of our loyal band of

committed drivers who not only ensure that our patients arrive at our Centre safe and sound but who comfort and reassure them on the way. They can confidently offer this advice and reassurance as they have been previous cardiac patients themselves and now – fully recovered and fit – wish to give their time and experience.

One of Tom's plans in his retirement is to recommence his country road journeys with his son on their respective Harley Davidson motorbikes! Tom, we hope all those roads you cruise on are safe and well sealed, because you will be out of our reach with bandaids and first aid!

Finally, now that all those humid days are past and the crisp mornings and evenings have arrived, what better time to take brisk walks.

Vanessa Baker



■ Vanessa Baker, Nurse Manager, North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre.



Major sponsor of cardiac rehabilitation and education programs at RNSH.

Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) Support Group

Sponsored in 2007 by:
Boston Scientific, St Jude, Medtronic, Biotronik

The ICD Support Group is coordinated by the NSCEC.

The Group's primary aim is to provide ongoing education, information and support for ICD patients and their families.

Meetings are held 4 times a year at the Royal North Shore Hospital and include an education session with light refreshments provided.

All ICD patients, their families and friends are welcome.

Contact: Ann Kirkness 9926 6560

Our sincere thanks to: Boston Scientific, St Jude, Medtronic and Biotronik for their ongoing financial and educational support of the ICD Support Group in 2007.

North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre

Office Hours:

Monday – Friday
8.30am – 4.30pm

Office Address:

Lvl 4 Vindin House,
Royal North Shore
Hospital, St Leonards
NSW 2065

Phone:

(02) 9926 6560 or
(02) 9926 8286

Fax:

(02) 9926 7844

Email:

vbaker@nscceahs.
health.nsw.gov.au

Gaining a basic understanding of Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICDs)

Q: What exactly is an ICD?

A: The ICD is a small electrical device designed to detect and treat life threatening abnormal heart rhythms that originate in the lower chambers of the heart: ventricular tachycardia (VT) and ventricular fibrillation (VF). It provides both pacing and shock therapy.

Q: What does it do?

A: The ICD continually monitors a heart's rhythm and provides three primary functions:

1. Sensing and detection of rapid or slow heart rhythms
2. Treatment of the rhythm with the appropriate electrical therapy. This includes:
 - Bradycardia pacing – low energy electrical pacing pulses when the heart rate is too slow
 - Anti-tachycardia pacing (ATP) – a series of small, rapid electrical pacing pulses used to interrupt the rapid, abnormal heart rate and return the heart to its normal rhythm
 - Cardioversion – a shock impulse to correct VT
Defibrillation – a stronger shock impulse to correct VF; it has been described as feeling like a “kick in the chest”
3. Storage of data for review at an appropriate time

Q: How long have ICD's been used by heart patients?

A: The first ICD was implanted in 1980 and approved for use in 1985 following the pioneering work of Dr Michel Mirowski (1924-1990). Since then, there have been significant advances in ICD technology – current devices are smaller, lighter, offer advanced diagnostic and treatment options and longer battery life.

Q: How many patients in Australia have had ICD implants?

A: Approximately 3,500 ICDs were implanted in Australia in 2006 – 112 by Royal North Shore Hospital doctors.

Q: Will an ICD cure heart disease?

A: It is important to remember that the ICD does not cure the underlying disease that causes the

arrhythmia, (abnormal heart rhythm), but the device continuously monitors the heart's rhythm so that it can deliver the appropriate therapy.

Q: Is it the same as a pacemaker?

A: An ICD is similar to a pacemaker, but the pacemaker is a smaller simpler device using low energy electrical impulses, primarily designed to speed up a heart rate that is too slow. The ICD's main function is to correct fast, chaotic heart rhythms (VT & VF) with high energy electrical impulses. ICD's have improved outcomes and reduced the incidence of sudden death. However whilst most ICD patients perceive the device as a great source of security, one that quite literally gives them a second chance at life, some may initially struggle to cope with all the rapid changes that have taken place in their lives and the emotions that follow.

The importance of participating in support groups

The Cardiac Rehabilitation and ICD Support Groups can play a valuable role in a patient's recovery.

Both are widely recognised support and resource networks for ICD clients, hospitals and health professionals throughout Australia. Group meetings are held four times a year and are always well attended. Over the years, it has hosted a wide range of guest speakers covering a variety of topics.

These resource groups also have a variety of ICD educational resources available. For example one resource is a booklet called “*Living with an ICD*” which deals with some of the psychological and social issues ICD patients and their families might experience.

An ICD “*Action Plan*” magnet and card is also available; this gives simple guidelines about what to do if you receive ICD shock therapy. Both of these resources were kindly funded by generous contributions from the four device companies – Boston Scientific (formerly Guidant), Medtronic, St Jude and Biotronik – and are freely available from the North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre. ■

*If you would like further information about the ICD Support Group or to attend any of the meetings please contact: Ann Kirkness, NSCEC
Phone: 9926 6560*

* Ann Kirkness is a Clinical Nurse Consultant with The Royal North Shore Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program.

Heart conditions worsen in winter

WITH WINTER HERE, PEOPLE AT RISK OF HEART PROBLEMS ARE BEING URGED TO TAKE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUFFERING AN ATTACK.

The North Shore Heart Research Foundation director and leading cardiologist at the Royal North Shore Hospital, Dr Peter Caspari, said that studies demonstrate that more heart attacks occur during winter than any other season.

“We believe that a combination of respiratory infections in the winter months, increased consumption of fatty foods and salt together with increased blood pressure, cholesterol and weight and decreased activity in wintertime are contributing factors to the increased heart disease risk,” Dr Caspari said.

“With winter-time, people should redouble their efforts at lowering cardiac risk. Evidence indicates that flu and pneumonia vaccinations are protective against heart attack in those at risk,” he said.

Dr Caspari said that there were clear guides on what people can do to reduce the risk of heart attacks.

“For a start, if you are a smoker... quit smoking. Smoking can increase your risk of having a heart attack by between 200 and 500 percent.

“Secondly, make sure your weight gets and stays under control. A sensible diet and regular exercise is the best way to do it.

“Thirdly, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and fibre. Fruit and vegetables contain anti-oxidants that help bad cholesterol from damaging your blood vessels,” he said.

“Fourthly, make sure you continue the medications that have been prescribed. If you do develop symptoms that could be heart related, don't delay in seeking medical assistance.”

So rug up this winter, stay warm... and stay healthy. ■



■ Rug up this winter, stay warm... and stay healthy.

A hearty thanks for Tom's years of driving

Having a heart attack drove Tom Brown into changing his life in many ways – including taking on a new job transporting other heart attack patients to North Shore Hospital.

For the past nine years, Tom has been a volunteer driver for the North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre, a non-profit resource centre that returns people to an active healthy lifestyle soon after a cardiac event.

The Centre's dedicated rehabilitation team works closely with allied health professionals, general practitioners and cardiologists to educate and implement lifestyle strategies required to maintain a healthy heart.

“I had a heart attack at 11.30pm and was rushed into hospital where Professor Helge Rasmussen and his team saved my life,” Tom said.

“That event was a turning point for me and I decided to help by volunteering as a driver where I could talk to people who had gone through something similar.”

Tom played an important role for heart disease patients by transporting them to and from the centre, enabling them to take partake in the rehabilitation process and live a better life.

As a heart attack survivor himself, Tom has always been a firm advocate of adopting a new 'healthy heart' lifestyle.

“To me it has been a privilege to be associated with the program; meet other volunteers and the others who work in the medical fraternity,” he said

As he retires this month from service, the NSHRF would like to thank Tom, for all his personal support and time he has generously volunteered. We wish him all the very best and a very healthy and happy future. ■



■ Tom Brown with Ann Kirkness (left) and Vanessa Baker (right) from the North Shore Cardiovascular Education Centre.

Healthy Eating



MEATBALL SOUP MILANESE

To get you started on the right track this winter here is a wonderful soup recipe which echoes the traditions of Milan.

Elegant Milan in northern Italy is known for its fine minestrone soups with sausage and local dried beans. So, here in the *Heart of the Matter* we have taken a traditional recipe and modified it so that it is lower in saturated fat, higher in soluble fibre and lower in salt – heart healthy!

Firstly we needed to replace the fatty sausages of old Lombardy with a combination of lean beef mince and red kidney beans, which will decrease the amount of animal fats and increase your fibre intake. Also if we cook the mince without adding fat, we don't eat as many calories! Remember to look for 'heart smart' or premium or heart tick mince selections.

Next make sure you choose lower salt options such as reduced salt stock and tinned tomato, and use herbs and spices.

These few simple tips and a great recipe will help make your winter heart healthy. **Buon appetito!**

Ingredients (serves 4, suitable for freezing)

- 400gms lean beef mince
- 100gms red kidney beans (rinsed from the can)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ cup fresh wholemeal bread crumbs
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves finely chopped
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- 2 tins of canned diced tomato
- 3 cups (750ml) reduced salt, tetra packed, chicken stock
- ½ cup risoni pasta
- 2 zucchini, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stick diced
- 1 onion finely diced
- 150g green beans trimmed and cut into thirds

Method

1. Combine mince, kidney beans, onion, garlic, breadcrumbs, basil and egg in a large bowl, season with pepper and mix well
2. Roll tablespoons of the mixture into bite-sized balls and place on a large plate
3. Mix canned tomatoes, stock, 2 cups of water and bay leaves into a large deep saucepan, cover and bring to the boil
4. Add the meatballs to the soup and return to the boil
5. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered for 10 minutes.
6. Add risoni pasta and cook for another 5 minutes
7. Add zucchini, green beans, celery and carrot and cook for another 5 minutes or until risoni pasta and vegetables are tender
8. Ladle soup into serving bowls.

Per serve	
Energy (kJ)	1536
Protein (g)	32
Fat (g)	9.6
Carbohydrates (g)	32
Salt (mg)	740

If you have a food topic that you'd like to see addressed in this column, please email us on information@heartresearch.com.au or write to Take Heart, PO Box 543, St Leonards, NSW, 1590.

Recipe reviewed by Louise Robinson from the Department of Nutrition at the Royal North Shore Hospital