

Healthy Perspectives

For the health of our community

St. Luke's Women's Heart Clinic Health Care for Women by Women

Heart disease has long been considered a man's disease. However, it is now the leading cause of death among women in the United

States, outnumbering deaths from breast cancer five to one. "One of the key reasons is lack of information," says Dr. Disha Mookherjee, cardiologist with St. Luke's Cardiology Associates. "What we know about cardiac medicine is based on studies of men."

Gender differences

According to Dr. Mookherjee, awareness of warning signs can save lives. "The 'classic' signs of a heart attack common among men—the sensation of an elephant

sitting on your chest, for example—may not always be present for women," she says. "Women often experience less obvious symptoms, such as jaw pain, lightheadedness and fatigue, which are easier to ignore." In the case of heart attack, delaying treatment can be fatal.



STORY CONTINUES INSIDE

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Women-focused care

To impact the quality of women's cardiac care, Dr. Mookherjee and her colleagues developed St. Luke's Women's Heart Clinic, a specialty clinic dedicated to reducing the progression or development of heart disease among women. The all-female team may include a cardiologist, two nurse practitioners, a cardiothoracic surgeon, nutritionist, exercise physiologist and psychologist. "Our philosophy of care encompasses the whole person—not just physical health, but also the social and psychological factors at play," she says.

Influencing the future

According to Dr. Mookherjee, how we live today may not affect us in the short term, but genetics and lifestyle have a way of catching up with us. "What's at stake is quality of life in the future," she says. "Having the energy to play with your grandkids, live independently, ride a bike, drive a car, travel or garden all depend upon the health of your heart."

Getting started

The first step to heart health is determining the individual's personal risk factors through an in-depth health exam. The initial clinic visit covers everything from family health history to body mass index (BMI). The team—with the patient at the center—develops a personalized care plan, incorporating nutritional guidance, exercise, education, follow-up visits and an invitation to attend the Women's Heart Disease Support Group. "The Women's Heart Clinic team is passionate about making a difference in the lives of women," says Dr. Mookherjee. "With the opening of the clinic, our passion has become a labor of love."

St. Luke's Women's Heart Clinic accepts both provider referrals and self-referrals. Please check with your medical insurance plan to determine insurance coverage. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **218.249.6000**.



Heart Healthy Recipe

Potato-Fennel Soup (serves 8)

Ingredients

- ~ 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ~ 1 large fennel bulb (about 2 pounds), chopped
- ~ 1 cup chopped red onion
- ~ 2 large russet potatoes, peeled and sliced
- ~ 3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- ~ 1 cup fat-free milk
- ~ 3 teaspoons lemon juice
- ~ 2 teaspoons fennel seeds, toasted (optional)

Directions

1. In a large soup pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat.
2. Add the fennel and onion and sauté until the vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the potatoes, chicken broth, milk and lemon juice. Cover, reduce heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.
4. In a blender or food processor, puree the soup in batches until smooth.
5. Return the soup to the pot and heat until warmed through. Ladle into individual bowls, garnish with toasted fennel seed and serve immediately.

Nutrition information (per serving)

155 calories, 2 grams fat, 6 grams protein, 31 grams carbohydrate, 6 grams fiber, 130 milligrams sodium



Gastroenterology

Trust Your Gut to the Specialists

If you've ever had indigestion, abdominal pain or heartburn, it's likely that a high-fat meal was to blame. But according to Dr. Waldo Avello of St. Luke's Gastroenterology Associates, the symptoms of indigestion can be dangerously similar to those of angina, so chest pain could be a sign of coronary heart disease. "We always need to consider the possibility of heart disease," says Dr. Avello. "Once a cardiologist rules out any evidence of heart problems, we look for gastrointestinal causes involving the esophagus, stomach and gallbladder."

To determine the source of the symptoms, Dr. Avello and his team explore the relationship between the symptoms and mealtimes or types of foods. For example, if fatty foods trigger discomfort an hour after eating, Dr. Avello might examine the gallbladder using ultrasound. If symptoms

indicate an ulcer, an upper gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopy offers a detailed view of the stomach and duodenum (the first part of the small intestine). The team also performs upper GI endoscopies to closely monitor patients with a history of heartburn or chronic reflux, conditions which increase the risk of esophageal cancer. "Often, reflux responds well to medication," says Dr. Avello. "But in some cases, laparoscopic surgery may be the best solution."

Another common disorder is irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), a condition that can cause severe abdominal pain and emotional stress. For many of Dr. Avello's patients with IBS, a combination of regular exercise and dietary changes relieves their symptoms.

Unlike IBS, colon cancer may not produce symptoms until it has reached an advanced stage. According to the National Cancer Institute, colon and rectal cancer claim more than 50,000 lives each year. "While colonoscopy is not a perfect diagnostic tool, it has dramatically increased our ability to detect—and treat—colon cancer much earlier," says Dr. Avello.

Perhaps the best rule of thumb is to trust your gut—and your symptoms—to a specialist who can accurately diagnose and treat your condition, and help prevent more serious health complications.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call **218.249.7940**.

2011 Go Red for Women Campaign

St. Luke's is a proud sponsor of the American Heart Association (AHA) Go Red for Women campaign. To support the campaign, AHA's Duluth chapter is holding its second Makeover Challenge, a 12-week initiative aimed at reducing heart disease in women. Under the care of St. Luke's cardiology experts and dietitians,

participants receive lifestyle makeovers that include a heart health assessment, exercise plans and healthy eating goals. The winner of this year's Makeover Challenge will be announced at the Go Red for Women luncheon on March 2, 2011.

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What's Inside:

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Gastroenterology

Trust your gut to the specialists

St. Luke's continues to look for ways to become even better stewards of our environment.

We invite you to join our efforts by receiving *Healthy Perspectives* electronically. To sign up, visit slhduluth.com/contact/healthy-perspectives and register your contact information. Thank you!

WINTER 2011

Healthy Perspectives

For the health of our community

Health care close to home

Lester River Medical Clinic welcomes David Hutchinson, MD, and Eric Kirchner, MD, to our health care team.



David Hutchinson, MD



Eric Kirchner, MD

Denfeld Medical Clinic

4702 Grand Avenue
Duluth, MN 55807

Clinic Hours
Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call **218.249.6800**.

Urgent Care Hours
Daily 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
(except holidays)
218.249.6888

Lester River Medical Clinic

6351 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55804

Clinic Hours
Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call **218.249.4500**.

Miller Creek Medical Clinic

4884 Miller Trunk Highway
Hermantown, MN 55811

Clinic Hours
Monday-Friday
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call **218.249.4600**.

Urgent Care Hours
Daily 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
(except holidays)
218.249.5700

Mount Royal Medical Clinic

1400 Woodland Avenue
Duluth, MN 55803

Clinic Hours
Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call **218.249.8800**.

P.S. Rudie Medical Clinic

26 East Superior Street
Suite 205
Duluth, MN 55802

Clinic Hours
Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call **218.249.4300**.

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