

My Good Friend



Tick. Tick. Tick.

My best friend, Tom, called the other day.

“Hey, Buddy, I had a heart attack,” he said. Not the opening I expected.

On Monday, March 19, 2018, Tom had quadruple bypass surgery at the Cleveland Clinic. He turned 68 on March 7th and two weeks later he was in the emergency room.

It gives one pause.

Of course, I went to visit my best friend once he had been home from the hospital a few days. He has a new drug regimen and an upcoming physical therapy session as soon as his chest healed enough.

Tom is retired. He exercises. He’s was a champion wrestler in college. He did everything right.

One thing he said to me when I visited was, “Someday, I’m going to eat a cheeseburger again.”

“Tom, the burger and cheese are okay. It’s the bun that you’ve

got to worry about," I told him. As VP of Anger Management, I've spent a lot of time studying what makes us fat. It's the sugar. It's the healthy-whole-grains. But when people get heart attacks, they blame the artery-clogging-saturated-fat.

Doctors lecture that it's your fault because you ate too many fats.

I would argue that it's the fault of the USDA Dietary Guidelines, which are based on the lipid hypothesis espoused by Ancel Keys.

As soon as my best friend had a heart attack, I started reading more about heart attacks. I want to help him. But I don't know if I can convince him that the doctors he let cut him open to save his life know anything about what will prevent another heart attack.

Except statins, of course.

You have to take a statin to prevent another heart attack. Right? And you should adopt the Mediterranean diet, which cannot be defined.

I wouldn't take a statin.

Here's the crazy thing: Only fifty percent of the people who have heart attacks have high cholesterol. The other fifty percent have "normal" or low cholesterol.

And I've learned that heart attacks are really about inflammation rather than cholesterol. It's the inflammation that causes the arteries to need repair and cholesterol does its job.

Plus, if you don't eat cholesterol, your liver makes it for you.

And your brain needs cholesterol. In fact, your brain uses 25%

of your body's cholesterol even though it is a small percentage of your body's mass.

"Statins prevent heart attacks. Without question. But lots of people have to take lots of drugs in order to prevent one heart attack. So, it's not worth the trade-off," says Dr. Stephanie Sennef.

I can't give you (or Tom) medical advice. Here's what I'm doing to try to prevent a heart attack of my own.

I'm doing my all to reduce inflammation. My last C-Reactive Protein blood test was good, much better than when I was eating high carb/low fat.

I'm eating my superfood smoothie most mornings and eggs the rest.

And I'm not feeling guilty when I eat a steak or an omelet.

I'm reminded of the middle age man who went to his doctor and said this: "Doc, I've quit smoking. I drink non-alcoholic beer, I've cut out red meat and bourbon. And I'm eating egg beaters and turkey bacon. Am I going to live forever?"

"No," said the doctor. "But it's going to feel that way."

Stay angry, but not too angry. Excessive anger can cause heart attacks, too.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Lyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Cocoa Fruit Superfood Smoothie

Almost a chocolate peanut butter cup, but exceedingly good for you.