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Wellness Profile

Joel K. Kahn, MD, FACC

By Jon Vanzile

Every year or so, it seems like medicine opens a new front in the battle against heart disease, one that will supposedly turn the tide against the leading cause of mortality among American adults. It might be a new device, new and better pharmaceuticals, more advanced diagnostics, or a new surgical approach.

Yet no matter how much hope greets these new developments, **cardiovascular disease** continues its deadly rampage through the American population, killing more than 600,000 people every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Why?

Cardiologist Joel K. Kahn, MD, FACC, thinks he has the answer.

“We have stalled in the fight against heart disease,” he says. “We aren’t addressing many of the underlying causes of heart disease. The current model is not addressing nutrition, supplements, or lifestyle.”

Instead of waiting for mainstream cardiology to catch up to the available research, Dr. Kahn has forged ahead, building a thriving medical practice and web of supportive programs that he says can help patients reverse heart disease and reduce arterial age.

His book, *The Whole Heart Solution*, lays out more than 70 heart-healthy steps everyone can take to reduce their risk of cardiac disease. This program was adapted into a 2016 PBS special that aired across the country on Thanksgiving weekend.

“My program is built around the idea that cardiovascular disease progresses silently and can be reversed,” he said. “It’s been very well received.”

Dr. Kahn’s transformation into “America’s Heart Healthy Doc” was no accident—it began a decade ago, when he “got fidgety” in his practice.

“I was doing the same five things over and over,” he says. “I knew there was more.”

Before long, he had subscribed to *Life Extension Magazine*® and launched himself down the road to becoming one of America’s leading integrative cardiologists. Along the way, he became one of the first cardiologists in the country to complete coursework on integrative cardiovascular medicine through the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M).

Today, he is continuing his push to prevent one million heart attacks by spreading the word that blood vessel disease is not an “inevitable” part of aging and that it can be reversed.



Joel K. Kahn, MD, FACC

A New Paradigm in Thinking About Heart Disease

The current mainstream model for diagnosing and treating heart disease is built around the huge Framingham Heart Study, which was first launched in 1948 as a population health study of 5,209 people in Framingham, Massachusetts. Since then, the study has been expanded to include new populations and generations and used to create a popular “risk calculator” that most mainstream cardiologists use to determine their patients’ risk for suffering a heart attack. This risk score is then used to guide treatment decisions like prescribing statin medications or hypertensives to reduce blood pressure.

Unfortunately, says Dr. Kahn, decades of experience show that this approach is hopelessly outdated.

“Framingham just isn’t adequate anymore,” he insists. “It doesn’t address inflammatory markers, environmental stressors, and all the other factors we know about. We’ve stalled because of the complexity of cardiovascular disease.”

Instead, Dr. Kahn recommends using a more complete model like the one proposed by **Life Extension®** in 2009, which graphically depicts a heart with 17 daggers aimed at it, each representing a proven risk for heart disease. These include low blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids; elevated C-reactive protein; excess insulin; deficiency in nitric oxide, vitamin K, and vitamin D; hormone imbalance, excess homocysteine; and other advanced measures.

“The multi-dagger graphic of heart disease risk factors really caught my eye because it goes way beyond the Framingham risk factors,” he said. “Although the development of cardiovascular disease is complex, if you’re armed with knowledge, you have a much better chance to identify risk factors and create a prevention program.”

Dr. Kahn has transformed his practice around this concept, with astonishing results. He begins his relationship with new patients by first taking a thorough medical history, then ordering a comprehensive battery of tests to build a database that he uses to estimate arterial and vessel age.

“We use advanced lipid testing, because a routine lipid panel is not enough,” he says. “We check apolipoprotein A and others. We also check thyroid hormone, insulin resistance, ferritin levels, urinary micro albumin, omega-3 fatty acids, oxidized LDL, and various inflammatory markers.”

He also uses the carotid intima-media thickness test as a measure of artery health and relative age.

All of this information is rolled into a comprehensive therapeutic program that almost always includes nutrition and diet recommendations, exercise, supplements, and, when appropriate, pharmaceuticals.

“We’ll see tremendous improvements in labs and decreases in carotid artery thickness,” he reports. “This is extremely exciting. Arterial age reflects total health, and physicians can be taught to reverse arterial age.”

DR. JOEL KAHN’S WORLD

Dr. Joel Kahn’s practice, the Kahn Center for Cardiac Longevity, is located in suburban Detroit, with offices in Bloomfield Hills and Grosse Pointe Farms. If you want to learn more about Dr. Kahn’s practice and organizations, visit any of the following:

Kahn Center for Cardiac Longevity
www.kahnlongevitycenter.com
(248) 731-7412



Dr. Kahn’s personal website offering tips and articles is located at:
<https://drjoelkahn.com>

The Greenspace Café, his plant-based restaurant, is located at:

215 W. Nine Mile Rd.
Ferndale, MI 48220
(248) 206-7510

The Plant Based Nutrition Support Group can be found online at:

www.pbns.org

Forks Over Knives is available online at:

www.forksoverknives.com

or on Netflix.

Dr. Kahn's Program for Younger Arteries

How is it possible to reverse a disease that's considered chronic? For Dr. Kahn, it begins with the basics: lifestyle, lifestyle, lifestyle.

Dr. Kahn himself has been a “plant-based human” for decades and recommends that his patients eat a plant-based or Mediterranean diet. He strongly recommends that everyone who comes into his office watches *Forks Over Knives*, a documentary film that says most degenerative diseases can be reversed or prevented by avoiding animal protein and processed food.



He also recommends moderate exercise, which means 30 to 40 minutes of exercise every day. He's quick to point out this does not mean that everyone needs to train for marathons or sign up for the nearest cross-fit class. Instead, he recommends gentler forms of exercise like tai chi or yoga.

“My credo is extreme in diet, moderate in exercise, and abundant in love,” he said. “Live well, eat well, exercise well, sleep well, and sweat a bit.”

Finally, Dr. Kahn is a strong believer in the power of supplements to help reduce disease risk, improve markers of heart health, and balance out dietary insufficiencies. He has a few particular favorites among **Life Extension's** products.

“I'm fascinated by the **Arterial Protect** formula and its potential of diminishing arterial plaque,” he says, mentioning **Life Extension's** heart-healthy blend of French maritime pine bark extract and gotu kola extract.

Dr. Kahn personally takes Mitochondrial Energy Optimizer, which contains a blend of ingredients that are designed to support the mitochondria. “I also recommend this for many patients, especially patients with congestive heart failure,” he says.

Some of his other recommended supplements include:

- For hypertension, which he identifies as “probably the toughest” cardiac condition to treat naturally, Dr. Kahn often recommends olive leaf, magnesium, and L-aurine.
- To combat widespread deficiencies in omega-3 fatty acids “even among people who believe they are eating healthy,” Dr. Kahn frequently recommends supplementing with a high-quality omega-3 fatty acid, depending on the results of blood tests. He regularly monitors his patients' blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids and adjusts dosages to keep them in the optimal range.
- He recommends vitamin K2 to all of his patients, remarking that, “I'm waiting for the definitive study, but so far I'm

impressed.”

- Based on studies showing reversal of atherosclerosis, he often prescribes garlic extract.
- For vegans and people who generally avoid animal protein, he suggests L-aurine, creatine, and vitamin B daily.
- If homocysteine levels are high, Dr. Kahn says patients should take a B-complex vitamin to bring them down.
- A daily multivitamin formulation is important to support general health.
- Lastly, he recommends that patients do everything possible to support healthy *nitric oxide* levels. Nitric oxide is critical to healthy arterial function. To help boost nitric oxide, Dr. Kahn first recommends lifestyle modifications like getting more exercise and juicing. If this isn’t enough, he suggests supplements like pomegranate extract.

Dr. Kahn’s outreach to patients doesn’t end with a thriving practice and his expanding media presence. He has made it his mission to support patients in every way possible—even if that means going into new businesses and launching new ventures.

“I had a patient call and say they were scheduled for a bypass and wanted a support group,” he says. “I couldn’t find one to recommend, so we started one, the Plant Based Nutrition Support Group. It was supposed to be just a few dozen people, but it exploded in popularity and now has over 3,000 members. Social support is so important.”

He also launched the Greenspace Café in suburban Detroit, which Dr. Kahn called the “largest plant-based restaurant between Fort Lauderdale and Los Angeles.”

If this all sounds like a lot, Dr. Kahn has a simple word of advice: “If you want extreme results, you take extreme action.”

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