



Linda's Tai Chi at LindaTaiChi@comcast.net

Our Healthy Heart

Weekly Handout February 10, 2020

Some people many have heard of the famous long term study of over 6,000 residents of Framingham, Massachusetts that began in the late 1940s and continues to this day. After President Roosevelt died of blood pressure-related complications and President Eisenhower had a massive heart attack, the government started funding studies to identify why heart disease developed. In Framingham and other studies, we learned that smoking; elevated cholesterol, diabetes mellitus, high blood pressure, and family members with early heart disease could predict the development of heart problems. The Framingham Risk Score (FRS) still serves as an icon of preventive cardiology.

But, the most interesting outcome of this study and other studies is that there are “soft “factors that can predict heart disease. The most important factor is how many friends you have and other social factors. We know this from the Blue Zone Study of longevity and wellbeing. At one point in our history, no one was ever really alone, no one was ever really lonely, and no one was ever without overwhelming support and friendships. Neighborhoods, families living close by, grandparents living in the home with the adult children and grandchildren were all factors. Small towns kept people together. Times have changed.

We know that **humans are social beings who are better off when not alone or isolated.** The price of modern society on our diet, our stress levels, our exposure to toxins, and also our loneliness has been high. We have to take active steps to thwart these threats.

As we focus on our heart during the month of February, we need to keep in mind our physical heart and our emotional heart. Good nutrition, moving naturally and regularly, and staying connected to people.

T'ai Chi is one strategy to keep moving regularly and to be with people who share a common interest is one strategy to be healthy and stay healthy.

Excerpted from By Joel Kahn, MD, founder of the Kahn Center for Longevity and Clinical Professor of Medicine at Wayne State University School of Medicine