

From Fast Food to a Healthy Heart

When Warren Selkow walked into the office of Cardiac Solutions, he thought it would be the same ol' office experience and have the cardiologist say the same ol' things to him. But after meeting Dr. Joseph Caplan and going into great detail about his multiple heart attacks, open heart surgeries, CHF (congestive heart failure), he knew he was in for a change. For the next two plus years, Warren changed his focus and lifestyle after working with the team at Cardiac Solutions. "They improved my quality of life and now I know specifically how I can live with heart disease," said Mr. Selkow.

After seeing many internists, cardiologists and surgeons from other states and here in the valley, Mr. Selkow was referred to a new cardiology group, Cardiac Solutions. Cardiac Solutions differentiates itself utilizing an entire team approach for healthy heart care. Selkow says, "It is more than just the team approach that made the difference in the quality of my life. It is the entirety of the Cardiac Solutions approach. It started with Dr. Caplan taking the time to thoroughly review my patient case notes and making sure Dr. Caplan understood not only my pathology, buy also what I really wanted and needed from my cardiologist. The team understands me not only as a patient, but as a person."

Dr. Caplan instructed Mr. Selkow to seize control of his own care. He started from scratch, and went through a series of Health Management Clinics offered by the team at Cardiac Solutions. These clinics provide education and support that assist patients with the management of their heart health. . These programs at Cardiac Solutions are taught by registered nurses and give patients individual care plans on a regular basis to educate and instruct them on their particular heart issues. The Clinical Program staff works closely with each patient's cardiologist as well as their referring primary physician to ensure the best patient outcomes.

Mr. Selkow found himself in a personalized Heart Failure Management Program along with one that manages his cholesterol. The Heart Failure Program is designed to manage his condition by teaching the patient about heart failure and how to recognize early signs of trouble. Recommendations for diet, exercise and information about medications are reviewed. Educating Mr. Selkow about the risks related to high cholesterol helped him take part in managing his diet and medications designed to prevent high levels of fat in the blood. "What is interesting," noted Mr. Selkow, "Is I thought I knew all that stuff about diet, exercise and drugs. As it turns out, I was wrong. The education the team provided forced me to get reeducated and to take what I was being told as not only the truth but gospel."

He also wears a pacemaker, so he is in a Pacemaker Monitoring program and because he takes Coumadin, he attends the Anti-Coagulation clinic that is committed to helping patients take charge of their Coumadin therapy and making sure that the Coumadin dosing is accurate.

After receiving a plethora of information and getting to know the team at Cardiac Solutions, Mr. Selkow thought that other heart patients needed to be aware of what he had learned. “Helping just one other person would make it all worthwhile” says Selkow. An accomplished author of a textbook used in the curriculum of business schools, Warren thought that he could use his talents to get the message out. Unfortunately this message was one that he tried to ignore for many years prior coming to Cardiac Solutions.

Mr. Selkow says, “Knowledge provides power, assurance and survival.” He started writing notes on what he had learned, why he had learned it and what his life experience had been to that time. Soon these notes blossomed into a manuscript entitled “The Simplified Handbook For Living With Heart Disease”. This manuscript describes the difficulties that one endures living with heart disease.

This book encompasses the entire life cycle of heart disease from first diagnosis, through open-heart surgery and recovery and finally living with the disease on a day-to-day basis. His wife and co-author wrote about what the caregiver is also going to have live through and how the caregiver must become the team captain to ensure recovery. The finished book took a year to write.

Within a few years of education and listening to his physician and staff, Mr. Selkow understands that “living with coronary disease is like sitting on a three-legged stool. As long as you have all three legs intact and the same length, sitting can be fairly comfortable. However, shorten any of the legs or ignore or break any of the three legs, sitting becomes rather precarious, if not just downright deadly.” The three legged stool represents diet, exercise and medications. All are equally important.”

The clinics at Cardiac Solutions also include education about the many basic lifestyle changes that can improve your heart condition. They also give you ways on how these changes can be accomplished. “It doesn’t happen unless the patient understands the chronic nature of his condition and makes up his mind to change his lifestyle,” says Dr. Caplan. His observation of Mr. Selkow confirmed that education enables the patient to understand and become dedicated to the process of recovery, healing and adapting.

Being overweight can lead to coronary disease and there are two factors that lead to this condition. Usually, people eat too much for the amount of exercise they get. They eat too many of the wrong foods, or fast food that is usually high in sugar, fat and salt. After Mr. Selkow learned about cholesterol, high blood pressure, sugar and the increased risk of diabetes, he said it really gave him and eye opener.

Modifying his diet habits was the most difficult task and it took many months to accomplish this change. “Not only should you avoid such things as processed sugars,

foods high in sodium and fat, but you must also learn how to substitute these with seasonings and the correct oils to be heart healthy,” said Mr. Selkow.

After a lifetime of working at a stressful job and not exercising, Mr. Selkow learned the hard way, “You can’t get too much exercise. Being overweight and non-athletic, and somewhere along the way getting older and sicker, I got lazy physically and mentally. The worst part of exercise is that there are few noticeable results at the beginning. But with support from my wife and the team at Cardiac Solutions, I kept exercising and began to feel a lot better and now I have a lot more energy. I swim and keep moving in the pool daily for an hour. When it is too cold to swim, I take advantage of the Heart Rehabilitation facilities or ride an exercise bike. My heart has become a new and improved pump.”

Also, Dr. Caplan suggests that you should know what medications you are taking, and why you are taking them. This information also helped Mr. Selkow have a better awareness and understanding about his chronic condition. He knew he had to make that lifestyle change by altering his diet, putting exercise into his daily routine and taking his prescribed medications as directed by his physician.

Now Mr. Selkow is coming for his routine check-ups and feels that he has a better quality of life. He has successfully made these lifestyle changes and both he and his wife can continue doing the things they enjoy in retirement. Dr. Caplan said that when he reflects on Mr. Selkow’s commitment to the changes he has made over the last many years working with the team at Cardiac Solutions, he is convinced that prevention and education is a key cornerstone in the fight against heart disease.

Mr. Selkow says there are many things that set Dr. Caplan and Cardiac Solutions apart from others. “Cardiac Solutions provide virtually one-stop total heart disease care. Under one roof the patient is provided with counseling, hands on care and any required testing. From the patients point of view this makes getting care efficient and effective.”

Many of the above healthy heart educational topics mentioned, can be found on Cardiac Solutions’ website: www.cardiacsolutions.net, along with the Preface Mr. Selkow’s book “The Simplified Handbook For Living With Heart Disease.”

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