



## Heart disease: An equal opportunity threat

Our cover story this month is another reminder of how heart disease can strike anyone regardless of age, race or gender. Nefertari Nelson-Williams was the picture of health—a 35-year-old teacher and expectant mom with four kids at home who ate healthy and worked out regularly. During her ninth month of pregnancy, however, she started having chest pains and shortness of breath. After being rushed to the hospital, Nefertari found out she had a rare heart condition called spontaneous coronary artery dissection, or SCAD, that threatened the life of her and her baby.

A team of specialists at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia repaired Nefertari's dissection and a healthy baby Shayna was born soon after. Following extensive rehabilitation and having an implantable cardioverter defibrillator, or ICD, implanted in her chest, Nefertari decided to share her story to tell other young women that heart disease can affect them, too. Read all about Nefertari's amazing journey on page 4.

Although it's an important part of our lives, people often have a hard time talking about sex. And those who are recovering from a heart attack often don't mention this "taboo" subject to their doctors. In "Let's Talk About Sex: After a Heart Attack," (page 8) we provide some straight talk about sexual activity after a cardiac event. It's something you shouldn't be afraid to discuss!

Treatment for heart disease often comes with its share of medications—and taking them as prescribed is important to stay healthy. If you find you're taking so many different medications that you can't keep track, "Good Medicine" on page 16 can help, with tips on how to manage your meds and prevent mistakes.

"Life's Simple 7" (page 12) provides information on modest lifestyle and behavioral changes that can lead you to a lifetime of good health. In this issue, you'll find information on "white-coat hypertension"; some real facts on how hard you have to work to burn off a Krispy Kreme doughnut; why gaining weight pushes up cholesterol levels; new research that shows eating veggies can help you stop smoking; and how losing weight can lower your blood sugar.

Don't forget to visit us at HeartInsight.com, where you can read two new online-only articles, "The Beat Goes On: How Implantable Defibrillators Save Lives" and "Plan, Prepare, Pack: Tips for Traveling with Your Medications" (just in time for vacation season!). And to learn more about women and heart disease, be sure to visit goredforwomen.org.

As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts and suggestions—e-mail us at HeartInsight@wolterskluwer.com or write to **HEART INSIGHT**, 323 Norristown Road, Suite 200, Ambler, PA 19002. You can also follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/Heart\_Insight.

Sincerely,

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Editorial Board Chair, HEART INSIGHT



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