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Q: Speaking as the director of integrative medicine at NYU Langone Medical Center in NYC, what does integrative medicine offer patients?

A: We focus on a holistic approach to patient care. We look at the whole patient and use multiple techniques: nutrition, supplementation, exercise, stress management and we monitor their sleep. We work with a group with of physicians to provide ultimate health for the patient.

Q: How can integrative medicine be applied as it relates to heart health? Is prevention the key?

A: For 50 percent of people who die of a heart attack, it's their first and last symptom. Prevention is crucial. Being healthy is something you must participate in and be proactive about. With an integrative program we are looking at how the patient can be well through proper nutrition, supplements and exercise. We are not just doing tests, we are coaching them on ways they can achieve wellness.

Q: How do you use integrative medicine techniques in your practice?

Dr. Dennis Goodman is director of integrative medicine at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York, where he also serves as clinical associate professor and cardiologist in the Department of Cardiology and Preventative Medicine. Consistently recognized as one of the "The Best Doctors in New York," as well as one of "America's Top Doctors" by Castle Connolly Guide, his area of special interest is prevention, early detection and treatment of cardiovascular disease with an integrative approach for optimal patient health care. Previously, Dr. Goodman served as chief of cardiology and medical director of Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at the prestigious Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, CA. Dr. Goodman has also worked at the renowned Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine. He is board certified in internal medicine, cardiology, interventional cardiology, critical care, clinical lipidology, integrative medicine and cardiac CT imaging. He is author of *Vitamin K2: The Missing Nutrient for Heart and Bone Health* and *Magnificent Magnesium*.

A: In our department we have a team of practitioners who are focused on nutrition, weight management, supplementation, exercise and stress reduction. We recommend to our patients yoga, meditation, massage, physical therapy, biofeedback and essentially become a life coach for them on their way to wellness.

Q: Why is magnesium critical for overall health?

A: Magnesium is important because the body doesn't produce it and most people are deficient in it. Magnesium is necessary for normal muscle function and all organ functions including the heart. If you don't have magnesium, your cells cannot function properly and you'll end up with health problems. Magnesium can help increase calcium absorption, the management of diabetes and can help you sleep. If you feel tired, you do not have enough magnesium.

Q: What role does vitamin K2 play in heart health?

A: Few people know the important role vitamin K2 plays with bone health, but far fewer realize the importance of vitamin K2 to heart health. Vitamin K2 helps calcium bind to the bone mineral matrix, keeping it away from blood vessels. This is important because if unwanted calcium deposits accumulate in the arteries, it can lead to blockages that can contribute to heart attacks and strokes.

A recent study published in *Thrombosis and Haemostasis* is a breakthrough for vitamin K2 research as it is the first clinical study showing the beneficial effect of long-

term vitamin K2 (menaquinone-7 or MK-7) use on cardiovascular health by improving arterial flexibility. When the science behind vitamin K2 is validated in more medical journals, I believe the medical community will recognize this nutrient as a very important, safe and inexpensive way to help reduce cardiovascular risks in patients.

Q: What role does diet and exercise play? How important are omega-3s important?

A: Diet and exercise are essential and play a vital role in heart health, and we have known about this since the beginning of civilization. As Hippocrates said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

We do know today what is healthy food, but our bodies have gotten so use to process food and sugar. We have to fight against these urges because they cause inflammation in the body and are the source of disease in the body. Omega-3 plays a major role in reducing inflammation. Omega-3 plays a very important role in any condition that involves inflammation.

Q: Does supplementation play a key role?

A: I am a proponent of supplements and I believe in them. They especially have a role in the American diet, which is loaded with too much sugar and processed food. Even if you are trying to eat organic food you still may not get the nutrients you need so we do need supplements. My big five supplements I find most essential include a multivitamin, magnesium, fish oil, vitamin D and vitamin K2. Other supplements may be used in certain patients with specific needs.