

# Gazette Health

Winter 2011 • Issue VI

THE MIDLIFE [CRISIS] ISSUE

**15** BABY  
STEPS  
TO BETTER HEALTH

▶ should men  
be tested for  
**PROSTATE  
CANCER?**

▶ COPING WITH  
**HAIR LOSS**  
in men *and* women

▶ how to dodge the  
**MIDDLE-AGE  
SPREAD**

FACING  
MORTALITY  
AT AGE 40

ROCKVILLE'S DEANNA LINZ  
SURVIVES A HEART ATTACK  
NO ONE SAW COMING

A joint publication of  
The Gazette



HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL



“

Things went from  
**ZERO TO 60**  
very fast...I was  
no longer feeling  
any pressure  
or pain, but I  
**THOUGHT**  
**ABOUT MY**  
**MORTALITY**  
the entire time.”

# facing Mortality AT 40

-STORY BY KAREN FINUCAN CLARKSON-  
-PHOTOS BY DAN GROSS-



he shortness of breath caught Deanna Linz by surprise. She tried to rationalize it as she popped an ibuprofen for the headache that seemed to have gone from dull to throbbing in a matter of minutes.

She took her last antibiotic, prescribed during a recent bout with an upper respiratory bug, and bent over to pick up her 1-year-old son. As she struggled to lift him, she knew in her heart something was wrong.

But in her head, Linz, then 40, could easily explain away the strange sensation in her chest, despite the fact that as a volunteer for the American Heart Association she knew that the signs and symptoms of a heart attack could vary from person to person. “It felt like a pill was stuck,” says Linz, who had swallowed two. “I had just gotten over a cold and was under a lot of stress caring for my child, who has special needs. And my husband, who is active-duty Army, wasn’t home. I thought it was all in my mind.”

After a phone conversation with her husband, she reluctantly called 911. “When the first responders came and saw me with my son, who was on oxygen, I’m sure they thought it was stress related, especially after my first EKG was normal,” says Linz. Following protocol, the ambulance crew transported the Rockville resident to Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville.

While Linz’s generalized symptoms didn’t scream heart attack, her family tree set off an alarm. A cardiologist in the emergency room, after learning that both of Linz’s parents succumbed to heart disease in their 50s, “ordered a full workup,” she says. A blood test to check Linz’s cardiac enzymes showed she was having a heart attack.

“Things went from zero to 60 very fast,” she says. “They gave me a shot in the abdomen to thin my blood....The worst part was in ICU, lying there wondering how much damage had been done to my heart. I was no longer feeling any pressure or pain, but I thought about my mortality the entire time.”

**WITHIN 24 HOURS, LINZ FOUND HERSELF IN SHADY GROVE’S CARDIAC** catheterization lab, where Michael Chen, M.D., chair of cardiology at the hospital, performed an angiogram. After using a catheter to inject a contrasting liquid into her arteries, Chen discovered a blockage. “We see heart attacks in young men and women,” says the cardiologist, “but given that Deanna was fairly healthy, the blockage wasn’t [continued on 20]



Deanna Linz walks her dogs Jack, front, and Halo near her Rockville home. With no risk factors other than “bad genes,” she suffered—and recovered from—a heart attack at 40, and is now considering training for the Marine Corps Marathon.

# "We Cater To Cowards!"

Walk In Emergencies Welcome.

## Complete Care Under One Roof

- Veneers
- Conscious Sedation
- Oral Surgery
- Root Canals
- Implants
- Crowns
- Whitening



Up To 24 Months Interest-Free Financing Available	New Patient Special <b>50% Discount</b> For Cleaning, Xrays & Exams (Not Combined With Ins)	<b>\$250 Off Placement Of Implant</b>
---	---	---

**A. Verma, DDS • D. Verma, DDS • Ali Alibakhshi, DDS**

## GERMANTOWN DENTAL AND COSMETIC CENTER

19512 Amaranth Dr., Germantown, MD

**301-540-0500**

www.germantowndentalgroup.com

1823927

## Free Hearing Tests set for Montgomery County Area Age 55+

Free electronic hearing tests will be given from **Mon., Jan. 16-Fri., Jan. 20** at select locations in Montgomery County.

Tests have been arranged for anyone who suspects they are losing their hearing. Such persons generally say they can hear but cannot understand words. Testing with the latest computerized equipment will indicate if you can be helped.

Everyone, especially adults over 55, should have an electronic hearing test at least once a year. If there is a hearing problem, hearing tests may reveal that newly developed methods of correction will help, even for those who have been told in the past that a hearing aid would not help them.

If you suspect you have hearing loss, call for a free hearing test appointment. Our licensed specialists are trained in the latest auditory testing methods and will be the first ones to tell you if you don't need a hearing aid. If you do have a hearing loss, we will explain your results and provide you with a list of options.

Free hearing tests available only at a location listed below.

### One Week Only: Monday, Jan. 16 - Friday, Jan. 20 Beltone Hearing Aid Centers

Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Evenings and Saturday by appointment

#### Bethesda, MD

Wildwood Medical Center  
10401 Old Georgetown Road

**(301) 493-5599**

**(888) 449-1735**

#### Silver Spring, MD

Connecticut Belair Medical Park  
3915 Ferrara Drive

**(301) 933-0557**

**(301) 850-1527**

#### Frederick, MD

Guilford Professional Center  
5950 Frederick Crossing Lar

**(301) 663-3141**

**(301) 703-2707**

1814438

Benefits of hearing aids vary by type and degree of hearing loss, noise environment, accuracy of hearing evaluation and proper fit. Beltone Hearing Care Centers are independently owned and operated. Participation may vary by locations.

FACING MORTALITY, continued from 9

expected. Her case serves as a reminder to stay vigilant and take patient complaints seriously."

Given the size of the blockage—blood flow was reduced to about 30 percent—Chen opted to insert a stent. "It's a hollow medi-cylinder with a balloon inside," he says. "We deliver it over a very small wire and then inflate the balloon to open up the stent. We withdraw the balloon, but the stent stays there forever."

"What's so amazing is that even with Dr. Chen putting a stent in my heart, except for the initial 24 hours, it felt as though nothing much had happened," Linz says. "But it did happen and the scariest thing is that it could happen again. Once you've had a heart attack, you're at a higher risk for another. It gives you a paranoid feeling."

### LINZ HAS LEARNED TO LIVE WITH THAT FEELING—NOT

letting it get the better of her—since that January 2010 heart attack. She's also learned that, despite being fit, her lifestyle might not have been as healthy as she imagined and that genetics are hard to outrun.

"My mom had a stroke in her 30s and a heart attack in her 40s," says Linz. "When she passed away at 56, she was taking 27 pills a day."

Her father, a business owner under a lot of stress, ignored the symptoms of his heart attack. "He wouldn't go to the hospital; he was worried about who would take care of my mom. When he finally went, he had a valve replacement and never left. He was 54," she says.

Growing up in the South, Linz's diet was anything but ideal. "I don't think I ever ate a vegetable that wasn't fried," she says. "Still, I never smoked and my weight wasn't a problem."

What was a problem was her cholesterol, even though the numbers didn't reflect it. "My cholesterol was well under 200," says Linz. "If they'd done my blood work five minutes before my heart attack, there wouldn't have been one sign or symptom indicating what was going to happen."

In Linz's case, her cholesterol numbers were deceiving. "What I learned is that guidelines are just that and what may be fine for someone else isn't necessarily right for you," she says.

Today she takes cholesterol medication and pays strict attention to her diet.

She also exercises, both for heart health and stress reduction. "I'm a cardio junkie. I love to do the treadmill or take my son out and walk the dog. I am trying to train myself to do a marathon," she says, noting that she has her eye on next year's Marine Corps Marathon.

Not one to let the heart attack slow her down, Linz continues to be active with International Pageants systems, having been named Mrs. Maryland International 2012. The group is a partner in the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women campaign and Linz serves as an association volunteer.

"Deanna has turned a negative into a tremendous positive," says Chen. "She's very involved in the American Heart Association Heart Walk....She's taken an adverse event and used it to make a positive impact on many other people's lives."



"Deanna has turned a negative into a tremendous positive," her doctor says. "She's very involved in the American Heart Association Heart Walk."