



From the Heart

A forum for the patients & friends of the Lown Cardiovascular Center

Our New Look Reflects Our Continuing Commitment to Patient Care

Welcome to the first edition of "From the Heart," a fresh new version of our well-received patient newsletter. This update to our traditional design also symbolizes an exciting transformation of our practice to meet the challenges of today's medical environment. Specifically, we are excited about the introduction of our innovative **Boston Heart** program.



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Over the past few years the major health care insurance providers have unilaterally been reducing their reimbursements to our practice (and other independent practices like us). This is a part of the ongoing cost containment effort across the healthcare industry. By 2012 our health insurance compensation had been reduced by more than one-third.

While we applaud the spirit of cost containment, we were deeply concerned with the effect such drastic reductions would have on the level of patient care. Essentially, the health insurance companies are telling us we need to double our patient load in order to stay even. But for every action there is a consequence.

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www.lowncenter.org*



Meet

Dr. Dara Lee Lewis

Dr. Dara Lee Lewis has joined the Lown Cardiovascular Center medical staff. Dr. Lee Lewis is an experienced, talented and richly gifted physician who makes an excellent addition to our staff and will greatly benefit the patients she serves.

Dr. Lee Lewis is a graduate of Harvard Medical School. She trained in Internal Medicine and Cardiovascular Diseases at Brigham & Women's Hospital. Prior to joining the Lown Cardiovascular Center, Dr. Lee Lewis was on the staff of Presbyterian Heart Group in Albuquerque, NM.

Her professional interests include preventive cardiology, echocardiography, women's cardiac health, and general cardiology issues including coronary artery disease and valvular heart disease.

From left: Dr. Ravid, Dr. Lee Lewis, Dr. Blatt, and Dr. Bilchik



Introducing Our Boston Heart Program

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Taking on twice as many patients would require us to cut the time we spend with each patient in half. Nationwide, the time physicians can spend with their patients has been eroded, with doctors forced to hurry through examinations in order to rush off to their next patient. It is easy to see how this would have a negative impact on the quality of care.

Here at the Lown Cardiovascular Center our patients have always received the highest level of attention and care from every physician, technician and support person in our practice. Spending time during an office visit is essential to more fully understanding, diagnosing and treating a patient on an individual basis. Rushing through an examination is not the way we wish to practice medicine, and we are sure that no patient wants to be “just another number.”

In order to continue to serve our patients in the manner to which they are accustomed - and deserve - we took the bold and innovative step of creating **Boston Heart**, a fee-based membership program for our patients. Many patients have already been exposed to this new structure for patient care. But we'd like to take an opportunity to explain it more fully.

For an annual fee, members of Boston Heart continue to enjoy full and complete access to the physicians and supporting services at the Lown Cardiovascular Center, with no reduction in the level of services received. Your membership in Boston Heart allows us to remain your partner in good health.

New patients, whether self-referred or referred by their primary care physician, will be automatically enrolled in Boston Heart, but will have their first year's fees waived. This will allow them time to establish a relationship with the Lown Center before determining if they wish to remain a patient.

The fees from the Boston Heart program help to offset the reduction in insurance payments that threaten to limit the time we are allotted with our patients. Your membership in Boston Heart allows us to continue to have longer patient visits and to provide additional important services for your health. Boston Heart does not replace your medical insurance, but supplements it. You will still need insurance coverage for medical procedures, hospitalization, emergency room visits, laboratory services, radiological imaging and prescription medications.

By limiting the number of patient members in our Boston Heart program, our physicians will be able to spend ample time with every patient. We can continue our practice of thorough examinations, closely listening to your concerns, and following through in coordinating with other healthcare providers.

Boston Heart also allows us to expand our services to you. This includes providing a Patient Service Manager to help coordinate all aspects of your care, including communication with your primary care physician, scheduling additional services, tracking medications, and many other actions that are required for good health. We have also added nutritional services, in keeping with our holistic approach to keeping you healthy.

If you have not yet become a member of Boston Heart, or want additional information about the program, please visit our website at www.lowncenter.org or call Cheryl Cadigan, Patient Services Manager, at (617) 992-9300.



BOSTON HEART PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP FEES

Individual:	\$500 per year
Member & Spouse:	\$800 per year
New Patient:	No membership fee for first year

For additional information call Cheryl Cadigan at (617) 992-9300.

Lown Cardiovascular Group to Become a Not-for-Profit Organization

In addition to introducing the Boston Heart program, we are making another significant change to our organization. One of the parts of our practice that has long set us apart from other cardiology groups is our dedication to promoting and teaching a comprehensive approach to cardiovascular care. We believe that finding new and better ways to treat our patients is part of our oath. As a result, over the years we have incorporated new technologies, while maintaining the primacy of close interaction with our patients. We have shared our findings and successes by publishing research papers.

These efforts in research and teaching are not covered by health insurance payments. Instead, our work had been supported financially by your donations the Lown Cardiovascular Research Foundation, a non-profit organization that had served as our fund raising arm. However, in 2012 the directors of the Lown Foundation decided to change the mission of the organization, shifting their focus away from supporting clinical and patient care work and toward researching general health policy issues. As a result, the Lown Foundation (which is now known as the Lown Institute) is no longer affiliated with the Lown Cardiovascular Center.

In order that we may continue our important work on advancing patient care, we are in the process of establishing the Lown Cardiovascular Group, Inc., a separate not-for-profit organization. This group should be completed and operating in the next few months. Your continued donations to the Lown Cardiovascular Group will help fund this important aspect of our overall practice. We hope you will continue to support your physician.



White Coat

Q&A

with Dr. Brian Bilchik

Q: With Summer here we are dining out more often. I am worried about my salt and sodium intake at restaurants. Any ideas on how to continue my healthy diet while still enjoying a night out with my family?

A: I am glad you are aware of the importance of limiting sodium intake. But that does not mean you cannot enjoy a tasty meal. Here are some helpful tips to reduce sodium when dining out. Keep in mind that 80% of the salt we eat is embedded in our food. Minimizing portions will help to control your salt intake.

- Ask for sauces on the side and use a very small amount or dip your fork
- Avoid creamy salad dressings
- Minimize capers, olives, cheese & croutons
- Choose oil & vinegar or lemon to dress your salad
- Request that meat or fish be grilled or broiled without added salt
- Avoid meat and fish that is smoked, salted or heavy with sauce/marinade or that comes with the skin still on
- Request that vegetable sides be prepared without salt, butter or sauces
- Ask for wedges of lemon to use on any meat, fish or vegetables for extra flavor
- Avoid the bread basket and soups, instead order an appetizer salad or side of vegetables to start your meal
- Avoid sides with added ingredient such as salt, cream, butter, or cheese
- Split an entree
- Ask for half of your meal to be wrapped up to go *when you place your order*, as the best intentions to bring half home often go out the window when the food is in front of you
- SPEAK UP! You can have greater control over the amount of sodium but only if you make modifications as you order the food





Meet Tara Mardigan, MS, MPH, RD

We are pleased to welcome nutritionist Tara Mardigan to the Lown Cardiovascular Center team. She is available for nutrition counseling and uses a preventive and individualized approach to her recommendations. She helps patients set achievable goals as part of a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Tara earned her Bachelors of Science in Nutrition from the University of New Hampshire and went on to complete her dietetic internship at Yale-New Haven Hospital. From there, Tara then completed her Masters of Science in Nutrition and Masters of Public Health at Tufts University.

Tara is also the Boston Red Sox team nutritionist and shares her beliefs of balance between exercise and nutrition with her Lown patients. Her mission is to inspire others to choose nourishing foods that not only meet lifestyle choices, but also health needs. After all, “good for you should taste good, too.”

You can read more about Tara on her website at www.theplatecoach.com.



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