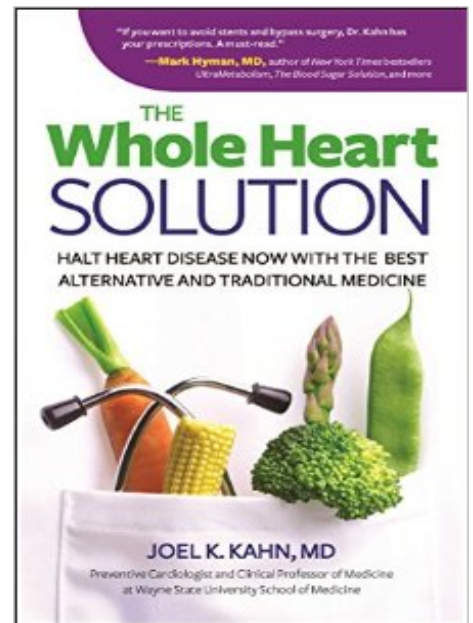


# 10 Questions That Need Answers

*What You Need To Know to Save  
Your Life!*



## Dr. Joel K. Kahn, M.D

Author of the #1 bestseller, *The Whole Heart Solution*

# Praise for Dr. Joel Kahn

I have known Dr. Kahn for many years and he has always been an inspiring and innovative leader in our field, as well as being a knowledgeable and compassionate doctor. His current goal to prevent 1 million heart attacks by early detection and lifestyle education is just what this country needs as it suffers from so many chronic diseases. By focusing on prevention with lifestyle, our future will have more healthy aging, making more productive and enjoyable lives. Congratulations to Dr. Kahn for taking this on!

Kim Allan Williams, Sr., M.D., FACC, FAHA, FASNC

President, American College of Cardiology

James B. Herrick Professor

Chief, Division of Cardiology

Rush University Medical Center

Dr. Kahn is the rare physician who practices both state of the art cardiac care, including interventional therapies, combined with advanced training in nutrition. His lectures and his writings, and his clinical benefits in treating his patients with plant-based whole-food diets have inspired many and placed him as a leader in lifestyle medicine. To top it off: his precepts and practices are congruous; he practices what he preaches. All of this making him a model for the physician of the future.

Hans Diehl, DrHsc, MPH, FACN

Founder of the Lifestyle Medicine Institute and

the Complete Health Improvement Program

Clin. Professor of Preventive Medicine

Loma Linda University, School of Medicine

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## Dr. Joel Kahn: Professional Biography

Dr. Joel Kahn is a cardiologist whose personal mission is to prevent 1 million heart attacks over the next two years. The 1 Million Heart Attacks Prevented Goal is embraced by the U.S. Department Health & Human Services and the Surgeon General. Dr. Kahn's brand of cardiology combines the best of Western and complimentary therapies for total healing. He is known as "*America's Holistic Heart Doc*" and graduated Summa cum Laude from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Kahn has been practicing invasive, interventional and preventive cardiology in Detroit since 1990. He is a Clinical Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) at Wayne State University School of Medicine and Associate Professor of Medicine at Oakland University Beaumont School of Medicine. In 2013, Dr. Kahn received a certification from the University of South Florida in Metabolic Cardiology, and became the first physician to complete the program in the world. The American Academy for Anti-Aging Medicine has also certified Dr. Kahn in Metabolic Cardiology.

Over the past 25 years, Dr. Kahn has improved the lives and vitality of thousands of his patients taking many of them from chronic health to vibrant living. His devotion to patient care has earned him Top Honors and he has been nominated as a Top Doctor in Cardiology for many years straight. His passion for education and prevention is recognized by his patients and peers doctors alike Reader's Digest magazine selected Dr. Kahn for their Holistic Heart Doc column and their publishing arm published his book, *The Whole Heart Solution*, an Amazon #1 Top Selling book. His second book, *Dead Execs Don't Get Bonuses*, was published in 2015 and is on the Bestseller List as well. Dr. Kahn medical views are published by the Huffington Post and Mind Body Green (combined circulation 50.1 million unique monthly visitors) and he is a frequent radio, TV and Podcast guest. Dr Kahn also appears regularly on Fox TV 2 in Detroit as a health commentator. To learn more about Dr. Kahn, visit [drjoelkahn.com](http://drjoelkahn.com).

## Preface:

### Questions to Ask Your Doctor

By: Joel K. Kahn MD , Professor of Medicine and Cardiology Wayne State University School of Medicine

As a frequent lecturer to the public across the US, I field questions from a broad range of people of heart health issues. These are often referred to as FAQs or frequently asked questions. Is olive oil healthy? Do I need to take vitamin B12? How much exercise is enough? And many others. The scientific basis for the answer to many of these questions, in fact over 6 dozen questions, are found in my first book *The Whole Heart Solution* (Reader's Digest Press, 2013). Another approach is the SAQs or the should ask questions. The questions I would want you to ask your doctor about your heart health at a visit. I list these here and hope they help you reach your dreams and goals by feeling good every day and reaching your full potential at work, at home, and in play.

## **1. Where can I get a coronary artery CT calcium scan (CACS)?**

As I review in detail in my new book *Dead Execs Don't Get Bonuses*, the approach to detecting silent and potentially serious heart disease from blocked heart arteries is archaic as it does not involve an actual imaging study of the heart. An examination, EKG, stress test or echocardiogram do not show the heart arteries and provide information that is remote from the actual site of concern. A CACS that takes a few minutes without an IV or injection of any medication can tell the truth about the state of the heart arteries.

Most hospitals in most cities offer the CACS on multi-slice CT scanners. Ask if it is a 64 slice scanner or higher, (128, 256 or more) as the dose of radiation is less on more modern scanners and the images may be sharper. There is a type called a FLASH CT that may have the lowest dose of radiation. Ask if a Rx is needed and your doctor may need to write you one even though insurances rarely cover the CACS. Expect to pay about \$100-250 depending on the hospital and it may be worth calling a few in your community. In my area the price varies from \$50 to \$250 for the exact same test.

Who should not have the test? Persons with known heart disease by a prior catheterization, stent or bypass. It is a screening test to find unknown heart artery issues.

## **2. What is my LDL particle number?**

The typical physical examination you will undergo will determine your fasting lipid panel of total and LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides. The LDL cholesterol is the test that has the most scientific support from this lab panel as a predictor of heart artery disease. However.....it is calculated and not directly measured even though it is so important. In fact, if the triglyceride level is over 400 as it is in many diabetic and obese patients, the LDL cannot be calculated at all.

Many labs offer a direct measurement of the LDL particle number. In several large studies comparing total and LDL cholesterol to the LDL particle number, the particle number was more predictive of heart outcomes like future heart attacks. A LDL particle number near or below 1000 is optimal, particularly in someone already with heart disease or an abnormal CACS.

## **3. What is my hs-CRP?**

For some experts the mantra of heart attacks is all about inflammation of blood vessels. For others, including me, it is about inflammation plus blood levels of cholesterol (LDL particle number) and other mediators of artery injury. Either way, inflammation is an important measure. Inflammation is the response you get with a sliver in your finger until it is removed, good for an acute defense, but bad as a chronic state. It may be related to obesity and poor diet, poor sleep, poor dental health, nutrient deficiencies like Omega-3 intake, and subtle

infections. The best test is the high sensitivity C-reactive protein or hs-CRP level. If it is  $<1$  then you are in a good place. If it over one, and I have patients with unexpected levels even over 50, then a hunt for the cause is necessary. Changing diet, losing weight, exercising, a periodontal exam, a prostate exam, and an evaluation of nutrition should all be pursued.

#### **4. What is my hip to waist ratio?**

The waist to hip ratio, or WHR, is a simple measure predicting the risk of serious health issues. Apple shaped people with a big belly and a high WHR are at more risk for disease than those that are pear shaped and have a lower WHR.

The WHR should be measured half way between the lowest rib and the top of the hips for the W and the widest portion of the buttocks for the H part. No sucking in your gut! You should be relaxed, stand evenly, and measure the W and H at the end of a normal expiration.

Abdominal obesity is defined as a WHR  $>.9$  for males and  $0.85$  for females. It is a more accurate predictor of mortality in elderly people than the waist alone predictor of heart disease than either the waist measurement or BMI (body mass index calculated from your height and weight on many online programs).

#### **5. What is my GGTP?**

Gamma glutamyltransferase or GGTP is an enzyme concentrated mainly in the liver. It is a simple blood test but not routinely performed. It is involved in the metabolism of glutathione, the master antioxidant of cells protecting your from damage. It is not so easy to measure glutathione levels but the GGTP can provide an evaluation of functioning of cell membranes and the overall health of your metabolism. If the GGTP is elevated then the membranes and glutathione pathways may be functioning poorly. This can be addressed with lifestyle like a healthier plant strong colorful diet emphasizing organic produce, sleep, exercise, hydration with filtered water, and supplements like N-acetyl cysteine and MSM.

#### **6. What are my thyroid hormones?**

The thyroid gland regulates our metabolism and is increasingly vulnerable to environmental factors like toxins in food, plastics, and personal use items like facial creams. Weight gain, fatigue, constipation, dry skin, and hair loss are some of the common symptoms of altered thyroid status. Most practitioners measure a blood test called a TSH but a complete evaluation of the thyroid should include the TSH along with a free T4, free T4, and TPO antibodies. An autoimmune condition of thyroid called Hashimoto's thyroiditis is common and requires measuring the TPO antibodies for diagnosis. If only the TSH is measured, milder but important cases of thyroid imbalance will be missed.

## **7. Should I get a sleep apnea study?**

Do you snore? Are you tired during the day? Do you wake up suddenly? Does someone say you stop breathing at night? Is your mouth dry in the morning? Do you have a morning headache? Do you have insomnia? All of these are common complaints that may indicate you have obstructive sleep apnea or OSA. OSA is very common, particularly in persons that are overweight, have heart conditions, have had a stroke or brain disorders, or drink or smoke regularly. If OSA is not diagnosed or treated, there is increased difficulty with heart disease, high blood pressure, weight management, daytime fatigue, and enjoying life. OSA may even shorten lifespan. You can get checked in a certified sleep lab or at home with specialized equipment.

## **8. What is my vitamin D level?**

Vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin that is now considered to be a pro-hormone having multiple activities including bone, brain, heart, and blood vessel health along with mediating the risk of various cancer. Certain groups like African Americans and vegans may have lower blood levels but the vast majority of people checked have low blood levels. This may be because so few of us spend prolonged periods of time outdoors with significant amounts of exposed skin. The best way to know your status is to ask your doctor to check your blood level. In most labs, a level of over 30 ng/ml. Many anti-aging experts, myself included, feel optimal levels are 50-80 ng/ml. Because it is a fat soluble vitamin, it is dangerous to take too much and if the level is over 100 ng/ml the amount of D supplement vitamin should be reduced or omitted.

## **9. Why do I have poor erections?**

If you are a male with erectile dysfunction it may be awkward to discuss this with your doctor. However, normal erections require normal arteries and trouble maintaining an erection may be a sign of future heart trouble 3-4 years before a heart attack or other heart disease becomes obvious. Other concerns would be testosterone and estradiol levels, thyroid status, stressors in life, diabetes mellitus, marital difficulties, alcohol overuse, and smoking. The CACS is the best test to screen for silent heart artery damage if you are having issues with erections. Get the answers before the heart attack.

## **10. What is my homocysteine level?**

There is a complex metabolic cycle in the body centering on a cycle between amino acids homocysteine and methionine. There are very common genetic abnormalities that effect and reduce the efficiency of this cycle and as many as 50% of the population inherited a partial defect. Check in a blood test called the homocysteine level gives a clue to the state of this cycle which may affect blood vessel and brain function, autism, and cancer risk. The good news is if the homocysteine level is high (and if a genetic test called the MTHFR gene is determined), simple B complex vitamins can be therapeutic. Often the B vitamins are most effective if “methylated” such as methylated B12 and folate.