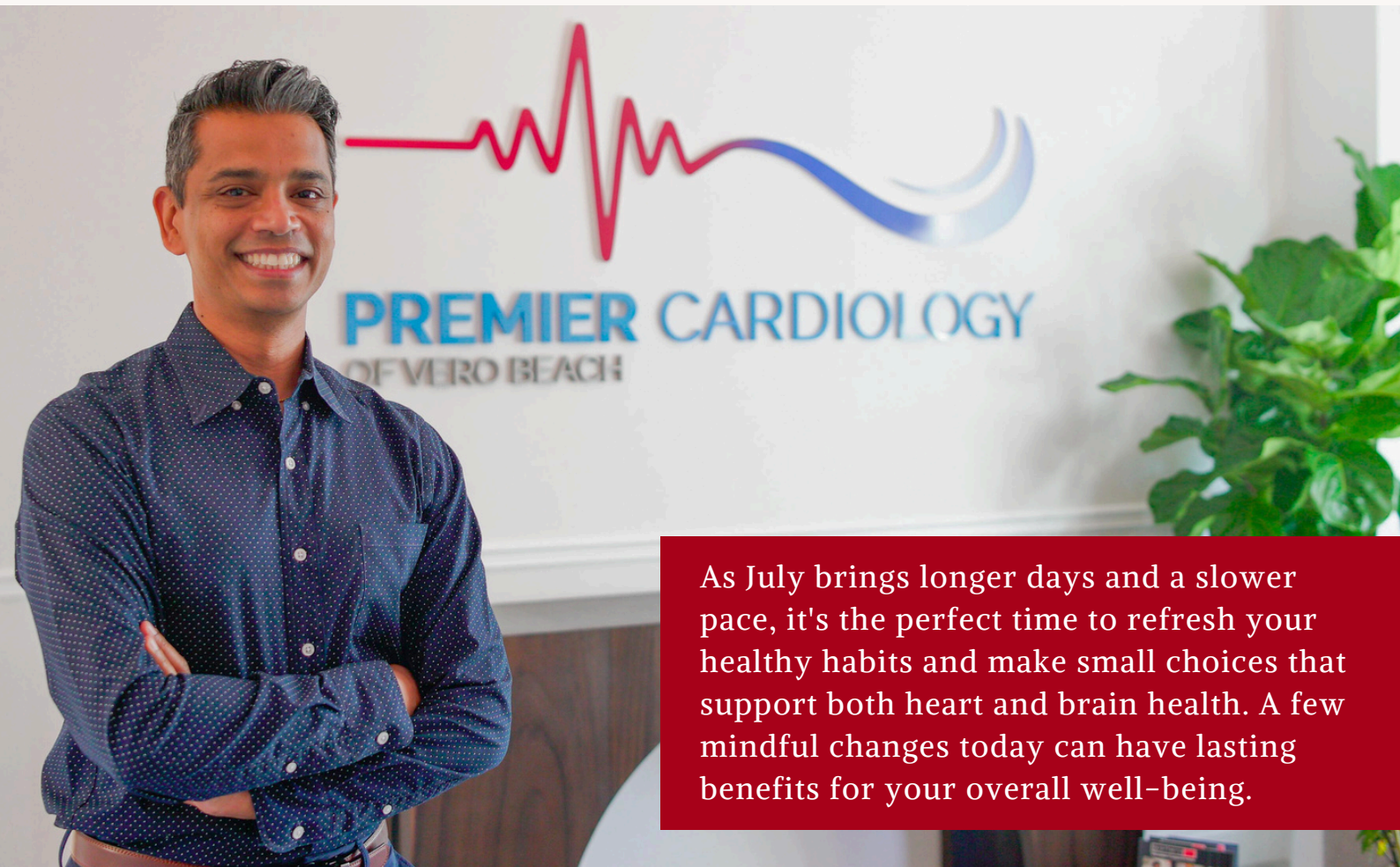


THE PREMIER PULSE

Your Monthly Heart & Health Update from Premier
Cardiology of Vero Beach



As July brings longer days and a slower pace, it's the perfect time to refresh your healthy habits and make small choices that support both heart and brain health. A few mindful changes today can have lasting benefits for your overall well-being.

July has a way of slowing things down — longer days, warmer nights, a little more breathing room. It's the perfect time to take stock of what's working in your health routine, and what might need an upgrade.

This month, we're thrilled to welcome a new face to the Premier Cardiology family, and we're digging into a research story that has genuinely surprised the cardiology and neurology communities alike: a diet originally designed to lower blood pressure has now been shown, in the largest head-to-head comparison ever conducted, to outperform the Mediterranean diet, plant-based eating, and every other major pattern for protecting long-term brain health.

Heart health and brain health have always been connected. This research just made that connection impossible to ignore.

As always, we're here to translate the science into something you can actually use — on your plate, in your daily walk, and in the decisions you make for the people you love.

— **Dr. Vik Gongidi**
Premier Cardiology of Vero Beach

Welcome to the Team: Stacey McCarter, MSN, FNP



Newsletter Highlights

A MESSAGE FROM DR. VIK GONGIDI

WELCOME TO THE TEAM: STACEY MCCARTER, MSN, FNP

THOUGHT PIECE: THE DIET THAT BEAT THEM ALL — WHAT THE HARVARD DASH STUDY MEANS FOR YOUR HEART AND BRAIN

MEDICAL FOCUS: WHY DASH BELONGS ON EVERY CARDIOLOGY PATIENT'S PLATE

MOVEMENT MATTERS: THE CARDIOLOGIST-APPROVED WAY TO MOVE MORE THIS SUMMER

OUR HAPPY PATIENTS

HEART-SMART RECIPE: CHILLED ZUCCHINI & AVOCADO SOUP WITH CUCUMBER SALSA
| THIS MONTH'S CALL TO ACTION

Premier Cardiology of Vero Beach is proud to welcome Stacey McCarter, MSN, FNP, who joins our team starting July 6th as our newest Nurse Practitioner.

At Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital, she trained nurses in telemetry interpretation, heart failure management, and evidence-based cardiac care. She is an American Heart Association ACLS Instructor and began her career as a Registered Nurse caring for telemetry patients before earning her Master of Science in Nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner from Florida Atlantic University. Her cardiology training included EKG interpretation, echocardiography review, and the management of heart failure, coronary artery disease, arrhythmias, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia—the conditions our patients trust us to treat every day.

Why Stacey Is a Perfect Fit:

- Years of direct cardiac nursing experience, including heart failure and post-procedure care
- A background as a clinical educator, meaning patient education is second nature to her
- Specialized training in telemetry, EKG interpretation, and cardiac diagnostics
- A genuine passion for helping patients understand their own hearts, not just treat them

Please join us in welcoming Stacey to the practice. We can't wait for our patients to experience the same calm, knowledgeable care she's spent her career building.

Thought Piece

The Diet That Beat Them All

Source: **JAMA Neurology / Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, February 2026**

For years, if you asked a doctor which diet was best for protecting your brain, the answer was almost automatic: the Mediterranean diet. It has the research pedigree, the public health campaigns, and the reputation. But a new study out of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, published in *JAMA Neurology*, just rewrote that answer — and the winner is not the diet anyone expected.

Researchers tracked more than 159,000 participants across three major long-running cohort studies, the Nurses' Health Study, the Nurses' Health Study II, and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study, assessing diet and cognitive function every four years for decades. For the first time, six widely promoted dietary patterns were tested head-to-head in the exact same population using the exact same methods: the Mediterranean diet, a healthful plant-based diet, an anti-inflammatory pattern, the Planetary Health Diet, an insulin-focused index, and the DASH diet.

Every single diet outperformed low-quality eating. But one diet didn't just win — it won by a margin large enough to matter clinically.

The Results:

- DASH diet adherence: 41% lower risk of cognitive decline (the clear winner)
- Healthful plant-based diet & insulin-focused index: 24% lower risk
- Planetary Health Diet: 20% lower risk
- Mediterranean diet: 16% lower risk
- Anti-inflammatory diet pattern: 11% lower risk

The Plot Twist: DASH wasn't designed with the brain in mind at all. It was created in the 1990s purely to lower blood pressure, through fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, whole grains, lean protein, and strict sodium limits. It turns out the same vascular protection that lowers blood pressure also protects the blood vessels feeding the brain — and high blood pressure happens to be one of the most consistent, modifiable risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia.

Perhaps the most actionable finding: the researchers found that adherence to DASH specifically between ages 45 and 54 showed the strongest association with better cognitive outcomes decades later. Midlife, not your senior years, is the window that matters most.

For our patients, this is not a diet you have to chase down or overhaul your kitchen for. DASH is built on food you already know how to cook: vegetables, fruit, whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, with sodium and saturated fat kept deliberately low. The science is simply confirming what cardiology has quietly believed for years — the diet that protects your heart was protecting your brain the whole time.



Medical Focus

Why DASH Belongs on Every Cardiology Patient's Plate

DASH stands for **Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension**, and for our practice, it has always been more than a buzzword — it's a clinical tool. Long before the new brain research made headlines, DASH was already one of the most well-studied, evidence-backed dietary patterns for managing blood pressure, cholesterol, and overall cardiovascular risk.

The Core Principles of DASH:

- Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy
- Choose lean proteins like poultry, fish, and legumes over red and processed meats
- Limit sodium intake to roughly 1,500–2,300 mg per day
- Minimize added sugars and saturated fat
- Include nuts, seeds, and healthy fats in moderation

For patients managing hypertension, heart failure, or high cholesterol, DASH isn't a trend — it's frequently part of the treatment plan itself. And now, with this new research connecting it to a 41 percent reduction in cognitive decline risk, the case for DASH has never been stronger. One dietary change, two of the body's most vital systems protected.


Movement Matters

The Cardiologist-Approved Way to Move More This Summer

Diet gets a lot of the spotlight, but movement is the other half of the equation — and summer is actually one of the easiest seasons to build the habit, if you work with the heat instead of against it.

Our Top Movement Tips for Cardiac Health This Season:

- Walk early or late. Aim for the cooler hours — sunrise or after 6pm — to avoid heat strain on the cardiovascular system
- Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. That's just over 20 minutes a day — a walk, a swim, or a bike ride all count
- Hydrate before, during, and after. Dehydration thickens the blood and makes the heart work harder, especially in summer heat
- Choose water-based movement. Swimming and water aerobics are easier on joints and naturally regulate body temperature
- Watch for warning signs. Stop and rest if you feel chest discomfort, unusual shortness of breath, dizziness, or a racing heartbeat that doesn't settle

 **A Note from the Team:** "Movement doesn't need to be intense to be effective. Consistency beats intensity every time, especially for long-term heart health. A daily walk you actually enjoy will do more for your heart than a workout you dread and quit."

MYTH Buster!

“All healthy diets are basically the same — it doesn’t matter which one you pick.”

TRUTH: Not all evidence-based diets deliver equal protection for every organ. The new Harvard head-to-head comparison found DASH provided more than double the brain-protective benefit of the Mediterranean diet in the same population. Different dietary patterns have different primary targets — and the details matter.

Other common misconceptions:

“If it’s plant-based, it’s automatically heart-healthy.” → Refined carbohydrates and processed plant foods can still raise cardiovascular risk. Quality matters more than the label.

“Sodium only matters if I have high blood pressure already.” → Sodium restriction is protective at every blood pressure level, which is part of why DASH performs so well long-term.

“I can start eating well later — it’s never too late.” → It’s never too late to benefit, but the research shows midlife (45–54) adherence carries the strongest long-term cognitive protection. Earlier is better.

The key takeaway: Choosing a diet isn’t one-size-fits-all. If brain health and blood pressure are priorities, DASH now has the strongest head-to-head evidence behind it.

Our Happy Patients



"Dr Vik is the best, most knowledgeable, and kindest cardiologist in town. Always accommodating-a plus!"

natalie keegan



"Dr. Gongidi has been my cardiologist for several years. He is an excellent cardiologist. He and his nurse practitioner, Amanda Presley, have gotten my A-Fib and congestive heart problems under control. When our primary care doctor retired, my husband and I switched to Dr. Gongidi as our primary care doctor. He is providing us with excellent primary care as well as cardiology services. He and Ms. Presley keep abreast of new medicines and medical practices and are very willing to discuss anything. He is attentive, checks on us in a crisis, and is willing to answer any question at any time day or night, weekday and weekend. We both highly recommend him, without any reservation, as both a cardiologist and now as a primary care doctor."

Phyllis McIntyre



Chilled Zucchini & Avocado Soup with Cucumber Salsa

A cool, creamy summer soup that delivers DASH-friendly nutrition without ever turning on the stove for long. Perfect for the hottest days of July.

Recipe courtesy of the American Heart Association | [recipes.heart.org](https://www.recipes.heart.org)

Ingredients

 Servings 4

For the Cucumber Salsa:

- 1 medium peeled cucumber, finely diced (about 2 cups)
- 2 medium tomatoes, seeded and diced (about 1 cup)
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped red onion
- 1–2 tablespoons chopped fresh jalapeño, seeds and ribs discarded

For the Soup:

- Cooking spray
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 medium zucchini, chopped (about 4–5 cups)
- 2 small garlic cloves, crushed
- 1½ cups fat-free, low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 medium avocado, halved and pitted
- ½ cup low-fat buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, stir together all the salsa ingredients. Cover and refrigerate while preparing the soup.
2. Lightly coat a large skillet with cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat. Cook the onion 5 minutes, until very soft. Stir in the zucchini and garlic; cook 5 minutes, stirring constantly, until zucchini is tender.
3. Transfer the zucchini mixture to a food processor or blender. Process 30 seconds, until mostly pureed. Add the remaining soup ingredients and process until smooth.
4. Transfer to a container with a lid and refrigerate until chilled (or freeze in serving bowls for 20 minutes for a faster chill).
5. Ladle into bowls and top each serving with the chilled cucumber salsa.

♥ Why it's heart-healthy:

- Loaded with vegetables and 7g of fiber per serving — a DASH diet staple
- Avocado provides heart-healthy monounsaturated fat
- Only 137mg of sodium per serving, well within DASH guidelines
- Low-fat buttermilk adds creaminess and calcium without the saturated fat
- 164 calories per serving | 6g protein | 7g fiber, with no stove time required at serving

👉 Get the full recipe [here](#)

This Month's Action Step

This July, give one habit a DASH-inspired refresh.

- ♥ Read one nutrition label this week and check the sodium count — most adults eat double the DASH recommendation without realizing it
- ♥ Schedule your appointment to meet our newest Nurse Practitioner, Stacey McCarter
- ♥ Take your walk before 9am or after 6pm to beat the summer heat
- ♥ Make the chilled zucchini and avocado soup — zero stove time, maximum reward
- ♥ If you're ready to take the next step, we're here.

If you're ready to take the next step, we're here to help.

📞 Schedule your Meet & Greet: (772) 494-0794

✉ info@premiercardiologyvb.com

🌐 www.premiercardiologyvb.com

Because the best care starts with awareness — and continues with action.

Warmly,

Dr. Vik Gongidi & the Premier Cardiology Team

Because the best care starts with awareness — and continues with action.



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