



# In Motion

website: <http://www.nasoceana.navy.mil>

## KEEPING YOUR HEART HEALTHY

*Former president now a model for "Heart Health" awareness*

story/photo by **Diana Settles**

It's important to maintain a continually healthy lifestyle to achieve an optimal quality of life and to prevent premature death. Heart disease can affect anyone. You cannot look at someone to determine their "heart health." You can be young and within body mass standards and still have high cholesterol. Just as it is important to do maintenance on jets to prevent them from breaking, it's the same concept when we take care of our bodies. The goal is to prevent the aircraft (or body) from breaking prematurely.

Former President Bill Clinton's recent quadruple bypass surgery was a real eye opener for many Americans. "It's a good lesson for all of us," said Lt. Neely Seibel, Health Promotion Division Officer at Branch Medical Clinic Oceana. "It's good that people are thinking about their diet and activity. A person's lifestyle today will affect his or her health 10, 20, 30 or more years from now," explained Seibel.

Currently approximately 58 million persons in the United States (20 percent of the total population) have one or more types of cardiovascular disease. The Centers for Disease Control finds that cardiovascular disease accounts for 45.2 percent of all deaths in the United States.

Clinton is now a model for heart health awareness. Clinton has been an avid jogger, but has also struggled to control his weight and cholesterol level. By his final presidential physical, Clinton had ballooned to 214 pounds, his cholesterol level was elevated, and his blood pressure was moderately high. At age 58, he was face-to-face with 90 percent or more blockage in some arteries.

Autopsy studies have shown the build-up that causes heart attacks can start as early as the late

teens and 20s. By the time Clinton lost the 20 pounds earlier this year, his coronary artery blockages were already well established.

PR3 Christian Parker from NAS Oceana Search and Rescue is one Sailor who has taken the recent health news seriously. "What happened to President Bill Clinton is a real eye opener for me. Though I'm young, it makes me think a lot about my own health and how important it is for me to start taking care of myself. I run three times a week and participate in strength training, so I know that is good for my heart health. I've just started eating healthy, but I'm trying to kick the tobacco habit. I know that when I quit smoking, I will be able to breathe better when I am running and my heart will be healthier," said Parker.

"Clinton's experience should emphasize to Americans about the importance of heart health," said Cmdr. Christine Ehlers, Senior Nurse at Branch Medical Clinic, Oceana.

"Our military community should focus on preventing heart disease – living a healthy life and to avoiding the primary risk factors for heart disease," Ehlers suggested.

### RISK FACTORS AND HEART DISEASE

Risk factors are conditions that increase your risk for developing heart disease. Some risk factors can be changed and others cannot. In general, the more risk factors you have, the greater your chance of developing heart disease. Fortunately, there are things you can do to address most of the risk factors for heart disease.



**PR3 Christian Parker from NAS Oceana Search and Rescue has his blood pressure taken by Lt. Neely Seibel, Health Promotions department head at Branch Medical Clinic Oceana.**

The known risk factors for heart disease that you can do something about include:

- Obesity/Overweight
- Physical inactivity
- High blood cholesterol (high total cholesterol and high LDL "bad" cholesterol)
- Low HDL "good" cholesterol
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes – if you have diabetes, your risk for developing heart disease is high

*Diana Settles is the Health Promotion Program Manager for Navy Environmental Health Center at Portsmouth.*

## OCEANA OFFERS 'HEART HEALTH' PROGRAMS

If you have not had your cholesterol level checked, talk to your doctor about getting it checked. For more information on the prevention of heart disease, visit the National Institutes of Health web page at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd).

### Branch Medical Clinic

Heart Health Classes – The Health Promotions Program at Branch Medical Clinic Oceana provides several ongoing heart health classes including cholesterol education, hypertension control, weight management classes

including nutrition and exercise education. Active duty may participate in the Navy's ShipShape program – a more comprehensive weight management program. To learn more about these classes or to register for a class, call the Health Promotions Department at 314-7172.

Preventive Health Assessment – For active duty, you can schedule a Preventive Health Assessment appointment at 314-7132 to have your risk factors assessed.

Nurse Managed Clinic – Anyone may par-

ticipate in the Nurse Managed Clinic This service provides one-on-one education from a nurse. For an appointment, call 314-7024.

### Oceana and Dam Neck Fitness Centers

Regular physical activity participation is key to heart health. To learn more about the Oceana and Dam Neck physical activity programs or to receive individualized guidance, contact the personal training staff at the NAS Oceana Fitness Center at 433-2695, or the Dam Neck Annex Fitness Center at 492-7185.