



# STRONG HEART STUDY

Cardiovascular Disease in American Indians

## PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

October 1990

Volume 1, Number 1

### OPEN LETTER OF APPRECIATION FROM THE STRONG HEART STUDY STEERING COMMITTEE

The members of the Steering Committee would like to express their deepest thanks to you as a participant and a member of the Strong Heart Study.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in American Indians. As a member of the Strong Heart Study, you are part of the largest study of heart disease ever undertaken solely among American Indian Peoples. The knowledge gained by this study can help us improve the health of both your generation and the generations that follow. The information collected from your examination is valuable to you as well as the Strong Heart Study. Every attempt is being made to get information back to each participant and the community as quickly as possible. The personal health information you receive after taking part in the study should help you and your doctor reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke that you face.

To be most accurate, it is extremely important to have everyone who was asked to participate, actually take part in the study. This is why your personal effort was so important. You would have been truly missed! Even now there are members in the community who have been asked but have not yet come in. You are our strongest link to these friends and relatives. If your experience was good -- tell them! If there is anything we could have done to make it better -- tell us! We'll try.

Thank you again.

### STRONG HEART STUDY REACHES HALFWAY POINT TOWARD 4500 EXAMINATIONS

A milestone was reached during September as the Strong Heart Study completed 2279 examinations, more than halfway to the goal of 4500. The numbers of examinations completed have been 799 in Oklahoma, 762 in Arizona and 718 in the Dakotas. This achievement is the result of a great deal of hard work by Strong Heart Study personnel in every component of the study, and of the enthusiastic response of the Indian people in the communities being studied. Thank you for playing such an important part in this first year of success of the Strong Heart Study.

During this past summer a number of the investigators had a chance to visit each of the examination centers to share some of the early findings from the study. We were pleased to meet so many of the participants and have a chance to review our progress and hear from the people who made it possible. That experience proved to be very valuable to both the community people and to the Strong Heart Study staff. We learned from you how we can improve the way we are doing this study to better meet your needs as individuals and as community members. We were able to provide preliminary data indicating how each of your communities may be described in terms of Indian culture, heart disease, and health habits. The early data show that the Indians participating from the three centers in the Strong Heart Study differ widely on levels of heart disease. Also, factors which increase the risk of heart disease such as smoking, cholesterol, and diabetes are also quite different from center to center. Indian people also appear to have different relationships between the factors that increase the risk of heart disease. For instance, diabetes, which is highly associated with high blood pressure in non-Indian populations is not as frequently associated with it in Indian people. These early observations confirm

that there is much to be learned about heart disease in Indian people and the benefits of the Strong Heart Study will be of value to individual participants, the study communities, and all Indian people, now and in generations to come.

### EAT SMART TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEART

The Strong Heart Study Staff at all clinic sites is trying to provide information on a healthy lifestyle to the people who volunteer for the exam. One of the ways that this is done is by talking to people about their diet. A low fat diet is advised. Eating a low fat diet helps prevent heart disease. It is also good for people who have diabetes, because it can help weight loss. Here is a quick and easy recipe which starts with a commonly available packaged food. It has very low fat, because lowfat sour cream is used instead of butter or margarine, and skim milk is used instead of whole milk.

#### MACARONI AND CHEESE

- 1 7-ounce package of macaroni and cheese (choose one with a powdered cheese-sauce packet)
- 2 tablespoons skim milk
- 1/3 cup lowfat sour cream

Cook the noodles according to the directions on the package, but don't add any salt. Drain the noodles, and then add the skim milk and lowfat sour cream. Don't add any butter or margarine. Add contents of cheese sauce packet. Serves 3 people.

Calories per serving - 284  
Total fat per serving - 5.4 gm

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If any of your relatives or friends are eligible and interested in participating in the Strong Heart Study, please let us know. You may call us at the following telephone numbers:

Phoenix  
(602)263-1628  
Call Collect

South & North Dakota  
(605)348-1900 ext 401

Oklahoma  
(405)271-3090  
Call Collect

Please write short story about your Strong Heart Study exam. Contact your Strong Heart Study Office.

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Strong Heart Study

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