

# Aortic valve has heavy burden

By Paul G. Donohue, M.D.  
 DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I have learned that my aortic valve is narrowed because of calcification. I am an active person. I was told there is nothing to do right now, but to report future signs of breathlessness, dizziness, chest pain or any swelling. Valve replacement seems to be in my future.



## Officials work to keep virus out of Ohio

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — An increase in the population of deer mice is responsible for the growth of the deadly hantavirus, but Ohio officials have tested rodents to make sure the disease has not surfaced in the Buckeye state.

Hantavirus is spread through the air, often in dust, from rodent urine, droppings and saliva. It causes severe breathing problems, often referred to as hantavirus pulmonary syndrome.

State health department workers have tested 468 rats, mice and voles in 15 counties to make sure the disease has not shown up in Ohio.

"We are always concerned about any disease that has the potential to be deadly," said Dr. Thomas Halpin, the department's chief of preventive medicine. "But we've done a good job of monitoring mice statewide."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified 142 cases of the syndrome in the past three years, 94 percent of them west of the Mississippi River. Almost 50 percent of the victims died.

Ohio has had no confirmed cases, but single cases have been diagnosed in Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia and West Virginia.

There are several types of hantaviruses. Two have been identified in Ohio — Prospect Hill, carried by meadow voles, and Seoul, carried by Norway rats.

The Prospect Hill virus has been found in Franklin and Lucas counties.

The state has added four other diseases to the "A" list, which requires they be reported to local health authorities within 24 hours. The diseases are vancomycin-resistant enterococcus, pneumococcal disease, streptococcal disease and streptococcal toxic shock syndrome.

More than 90 diseases must be reported to the state, including hantavirus pulmonary syndrome. Last year, the department received 69,819 reports of disease statewide.

## Python found in bathroom

LANCASTER, Pa. (AP) — Talk about things that go bump in the night.

Members of the Quirindongos family were awakened by a strange sound early Monday and discovered a 2-foot-long python in their bathroom.

The snake had crawled up through the plumbing, came out through the toilet and wrapped itself around the porcelain. It was removed by police.

Virgin Quirindongos said she awoke just before 5 a.m. to the thump of the toilet lid closing and nudged her sleeping husband, Luis, 37, who stumbled into the bathroom to investigate.

He returned — wide awake. "You won't believe this," he said. "There's a snake in the bathroom. It came out of the toilet bowl and pushed the seat up to get out."

Everyone is puzzled as to where the snake came from.

## To your good health

ture. No symptoms yet, though. Please comment. — H.M.

ANSWER: "Aortic stenosis" means a narrowing of the aortic valve, often due to calcium buildup over a lifetime of use.

The heavy-duty aortic valve goes to work each and every time the heart pumps blood out to the aorta vessel. It prevents leakage and backflow of blood into the heart during a beat.

The calcium has narrowed your valve. More important than the calcium is the extra strain on the heart because of the stress imposed by the narrowed valve opening.

The symptoms you list for future notation often do follow from such chronic physical stress, signaling the fact that the heart has approached shaky ground, and that perhaps there is need of valve repair or replacement.

In the future, you should tell all doctors about the valve problem.

A deformed valve invites bacteria, which can enter by way of a tiny breach in the mouth — as from

dental work, for example. We call that "acute bacterial endocarditis," and it's a catastrophic event.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I would love to have skin tags removed, but I don't know what kind of doctor to see about it. I have a friend who clips hers off with a nail clipper. That doesn't seem right to me. — Mrs. G.C.

ANSWER: Go to your family doctor, who can snip off the skin tags or zap them with a little jolt

of electricity.

Your friend is acting rashly in clipping her skin tags with nail clippers. Ouch! I would worry about potential infection.

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate them in his column whenever possible. Readers may write him at P.O. Box 5539, Riverton, NJ 08077-5539.

## Brining receives master's degree in art education

Charisse G. Brining received her master's degree in art education from The University of Dayton during winter exercises held at the UD Arena on Dec. 21.

Brining, 623 Norwood Drive, received her bachelor's degree from Wilmington College, majoring in both art and physical education, in 1978. She has previously taught in both her areas of study.

She is currently teaching part-time in grades 1-8 at Holy Rosary School in St. Marys. She has also coached volleyball and been the athletic director for three years. Brining, a 1973 Sidney High School graduate, has also substituted for Sidney Schools since 1985.

Her family consists of her husband, William, and two sons, Shane and Kirk. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James F. Lewis, 101 Bon Air Drive.

Besides teaching she belongs to The Ohio Association of Garden Clubs, Hoe and Hope Garden Club and The Ohio Art Association. She has been a den leader for Cub Scout Pack 188 and a 4-H leader.

## Area news briefs

### Leong guest speaker

Sidney's Sunset Kiwanis Club begins its 1997 meeting schedule Wednesday discussing New Year's resolutions and why people do not always keep them.

Failed resolutions will be the topic of Pam Leong, Shelby County's Extension Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences, when the Sunset Club resumes its regular Wednesday dinner meeting at 6 p.m. at the Holiday Inn. Local teacher Molly Charles speaks to the club on Jan. 15 about her recent walking trip to Traverse City in northern Michigan.

### Boss gains honor

Amber Boss has been selected Student of the Month for January by the Student Council at Emerson Elementary School. She is the daughter of Sharon and Jerry Boss, 628 Sycamore St., Sidney.

According to Diane Lee, second-grade teacher, she nominated Amber because she is considerate, kind-hearted, adds to class discussions, works hard, minds her own business and is responsible.

Amber said her family enjoys playing games and reading and she likes T-ball and roller skating.

A plaque with Amber's name will be displayed at the school. She will receive a Student of the Month T-shirt and a free meal from Hardee's.

### Boating class slated

PIQUA — The Upper Valley Joint Vocational School will host a one-night class on rough-weather boating Jan. 23 from 7 to 9 p.m. Registration for this workshop will be made on a first-come first-served basis from now until Jan. 17. This is a free workshop.

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