The Causal Link Between Infectious Diseases and Heart Disease
by Dr. Ronald Klatz and Dr. Robert Goldman

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the US and is projected to be the leading cause of disability in the world by 2020. Researchers from Johns Hopkins University studied 900 heart disease patients and found that the more infectious agents patients tested positive for, the more likely they were to die of a heart attack. Researchers are not sure how infection causes heart disease, but hypothesize that it may have something to do with direct infection and inflammation of an artery wall. The healing of the infection results in plaque formation.

Infectious pathogens most closely linked to heart disease are:

- **Chlamydia Pneumoniae**: A common pathogen that is present in respiratory infections such as pneumonia, sinusitis and bronchitis. By age 30, 50% of people have been infected with chlamydia pneumoniae; by age 70, that number rises to 80%. Some researchers suggest that an uneventful chlamydia pneumoniae infection during childhood could start a chronic infection of the coronary arteries that goes unnoticed until a heart attack occurs 50 years after the fact.

- **Helicobacter Pylori**: In the gastrointestinal tract, H pylori infection has been associated with a chronic low-grade infection. Researchers are now linking the bacteria to heart disease as well. In one British study, heart attacks were twice as common among people infected with H pylori than people not infected with the bacterium.

- **Dental Infections**: Gum disease - both gingivitis and periodontal disease - is caused by several types of bacteria. In severe cases, bacteria can escape into the bloodstream and wreak havoc elsewhere in the body. In addition, free radicals generated by the inflammation of periodontal disease may promote the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, enhancing the development of atherosclerosis.

**Piercing Your Ears Might Break Your Heart**

People with congenital heart disease (which affects more than 1 million Americans) are at greater risk for developing life-threatening endocarditis, an infection of the heart valve, when they have body parts pierced or tattoos done. Performed improperly, piercing and tattooing open the skin to potentially deadly bacteria. People at risk for this infection should take preventive antibiotics before undergoing any piercing procedures or tattooing.

Though relatively rare, endocarditis can also occur as a result of periodontal infection, urinary tract infection, pneumonia and certain dental procedures. Among high-risk people, endocarditis prevention via antibiotics is recommended for dental procedures including:

- Extractions
- Periodontal procedures including surgery and scaling
- Dental implants
- Root canals
- Placement of orthodontic bands
- Cleaning of teeth when bleeding is expected

The statistics are sobering. Infectious diseases are the third leading cause of death in the US after heart disease and cancer, claiming more than 100,000 Americans' lives annually and costing more than $30 billion in direct treatment expense alone. Infectious diseases are responsible for a quarter to a third of the 54 million deaths globally each year and are the world's leading cause of death among children and young adults.

The truth is that we are in the midst of a huge pandemic that is largely ignored by the mainstream medical community. As many as 75% of Americans suffer from some form of bacterial, viral, parasitic or fungal infection, running the gamut from hardly noticeable to devastating. These infections include conditions such as intestinal parasites manifested as ulcers and gastroenteritis, chronic sinus infection, strep throat, yeast (candida) infection, sexually transmitted disease, and urinary tract infection — to name a few. Even more frightening: today's most virulent killers — heart disease and cancer — can develop from bacterial, viral, fungal, or parasitic infections.

**Recommended Reading:**
*Infection Protection: How to Fight the Germs That Make You Sick* (HarperCollins, 2002, hardcover, 448 pages), authored by anti-aging medicine's physician co-founders Dr. Ronald Klatz and Dr. Robert Goldman, is a must-read for people with busy lives who can't afford to get sick. *Infection Protection* is your personal guide to why bugs might cause you a runny nose, sore throat, itchy rash, digestive upset, aches and pains, and more. *Infection Protection* is filled with practical "bug-busting" strategies — tips to beat hidden invaders that wreak havoc with our protective immune function. This indispensable book can help you achieve the healthy, energetic life you deserve. Available from The World Health Network at www.worldhealth.net, the Internet's leading anti-aging portal and from the headquarters of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M) by calling 773-528-4333.

**Author Byline:**
Dr. Ronald Klatz and Dr. Robert Goldman are the physician co-founders of the anti-aging medical movement and the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M; Chicago, Illinois USA), a non-profit medical organization dedicated to the advancement of technology to detect, prevent, and treat aging related disease and to promote research into methods to retard and optimize the human aging process. A4M is also dedicated to educating physicians, scientists, and members of the public on anti-aging issues. Visit The World Health Network, the Internet's #1 anti-aging portal, offering thousands of pages of free life-enhancing, life-extending information and a free Electronic Biotech Newsletter.