

## MEDICINE

# Heart Killer Stopped

By surgically creating an artery leading from the aorta, patients with coronary heart disease can get the much needed supply of blood blocked off by the disease.

► A SURGICAL operation to stop the great killer, coronary heart disease, was announced by Dr. Claude S. Beck, Western Reserve School of Medicine, Cleveland, at the meeting in Chicago of the Society for Vascular Surgery.

The coronary disease, in which the arteries supplying the heart muscle are blocked is the most common form of heart disease, the one that strikes men in the prime of life. Angina pectoris is one form of it. "Blue baby" and other heart conditions for which successful operations have recently been devised are less common.

Dr. Beck's operation consists in creating a new artery leading off the aorta, main artery of the body which carries blood from the heart to the smaller arteries which supply all parts of the body. It is the first time an artery has been created leading from the aorta.

The artery is made from a piece of vein grafted to it and is connected to a vein of the heart. The vein is used to

pipe in a new blood supply to the heart.

By turning a vein into an artery, surgeons can "give protection to the heart" which otherwise would die bit by bit from lack of blood to nourish it. With the new operation, it is possible to give the heart muscle even more blood than it needs, and Dr. Beck cautioned against giving too big a supply.

"There is a ceiling," he said, "to the amount of blood the heart muscle can take."

The operation so far has been performed on only one human patient, who died. He had a severe form of the disease. But the operation has been done on hundreds of dogs in the course of perfecting it.

"We are approaching the time when we may be able to do some good to these coronary heart disease patients by operation," Dr. Beck declared. He foresees many such operations being performed by himself and other surgeons.

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chance for survival were found to be shortness of breath, clouding of the senses and clammy sweating and hiccupping.

People who have had generalized hardening of the arteries or who have collapsed following an attack of heart failure, and those who have had diabetes, ulcers of the stomach or rheumatic fever have little likelihood, the doctors found, of return to useful life after a coronary attack.

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## Penicillin May Prevent Rheumatic Fever Attacks

► HOPE that rheumatic fever, greatcrippler of children's hearts, may in the future be prevented appeared in a report from Drs. Benedict F. Massell, James W. Dow and T. Duckett Jones of Boston, at the meeting of the American Medical Association in Chicago.

At the House of the Good Samaritan in Boston, they have been giving penicillin pills three times a day for ten days to little rheumatic fever patients who had streptococcus germs in their throats. In

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# New Facts on Heart Ills

► TOBACCO, coffee and irregular or scanty meals apparently have no effect on the outlook for patients who have had heart attacks. At any rate, "it was impossible satisfactorily to determine any effect" in 240 patients, four physicians reported to the American Medical Association meeting in Chicago.

The physicians are Drs. F. Tremaine Billings, Jr., Bernard M. Kalstone, James L. Spencer and George R. Meneely of Nashville, Tenn.

In spite of the old impression that overweight persons are more prone to heart and blood-vessel disease, only one-third of the group studied were overweight. The immediate mortality, that is, deaths within 30 days after the heart attack, was slightly but not significantly lower among the heavyweights than among the normal-weight persons. The underweight persons had a slightly higher immediate mortality. Almost three-fourths of the overweights had high

blood pressure, which probably protected them from a fall in pressure after the heart attack.

Contrary to popular impression, farmers are almost twice as likely to die within 30 days after a heart attack than doctors, lawyers, and tradespeople. The explanation is that farmers and country people generally are only half as likely to be brought to a hospital within 24 hours after a heart attack. Patients brought to hospitals within 24 hours have a better chance of surviving than those brought in between 24 and 96 hours afterwards.

Right now and for the next two months is the season for fewest heart attacks. December, January and February, the cold months, are the time when heart attacks are most numerous and heart deaths most frequent. Immediate mortality is lowest, however, in March, April and May.

Ominous signs foreboding a poor



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