



February 23, 2016 – Grand Rapids, MI

Your Heart and Syncytium

We're finishing American Heart Month with some things you probably didn't know about your heart. Your heart is unique in many ways and this week, you're going to learn a few of them.

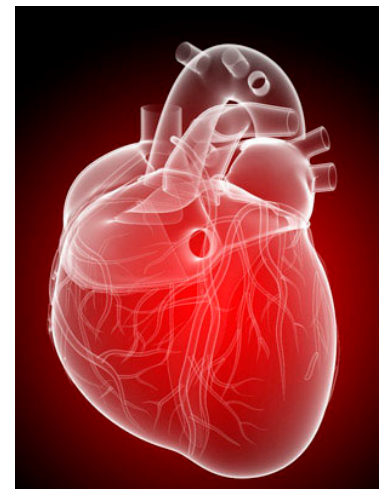
The heart muscle is similar to skeletal muscle in the way it contracts, but that's where the similarity ends. While skeletal muscles are laid out in parallel fashion and independent of one another, the heart muscle splits and connects to other fibers. In that way, every heart muscle cell connects to every other heart muscle cell. That allows signals to be transferred very quickly. It's referred to as a **syncytium** in that the heart can act as a single unit.

But the heart must contract in specific locations at the correct time in order for blood to be pumped. The heart has to contract at the upper chambers first, the atria, and then the bottom of the lower chambers called the ventricles. That allows the blood to be pumped from the upper chambers to the lower, then from the lower chambers through arteries to the body. Pretty cool, isn't it? Wait until you read Thursday's message about the electrical system of the heart.

If you haven't gotten your copy of [Women's Heart Health](#), there are still some available. Order yours today.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet



WGVU FM 88.5/95.3 **NPR** ***Straight Talk on Health***

Hear Dr. Chet's take on the latest health news and research—listen to *Straight Talk on Health* Sunday at 7:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. in the Eastern Time Zone on WGVU-FM 88.5 or 95.3, or listen live via the Internet by going to www.wgvu.org/wgvunews and clicking on "Listen Live" at the top.

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