



# better you

IMAGINE THAT.

## Men Versus Women

A game you can't  
afford to lose

Clearing  
clogged arteries?  
How we fix you faster

PFO?  
It's a little known  
heart condition





## CHI Health Leads Country in Money-Saving, Patient-Friendly Heart Procedure

A heart procedure that's easier on you, has fewer complications and costs less? You'd choose it over one with a longer recovery time and potentially more problems, right?

The more patient-friendly procedure is the transradial percutaneous coronary intervention (radial procedure) and CHI

Health cardiologists have some of the most extensive experience in the country performing this procedure. More than 70 percent of the procedures we do for patients with blocked arteries are now radial – and climbing.

Nationally, the rate is about 37 percent, or approximately half of CHI Health's.

Why is this a big deal?

Before the radial procedure was introduced, cardiologists would run a wire through a blood vessel in the patient's groin up to the blocked artery to place a stent. With the new procedure doctors instead go through an artery in the wrist.

New research published in JACC: Cardiovascular Interventions found that if more radial, same-day interventions were performed, hospitals across the country could save \$300 million a year. In other words, following CHI Health's lead could save a lot of money.

**A heart procedure that's easier on you, has fewer complications and costs less?**

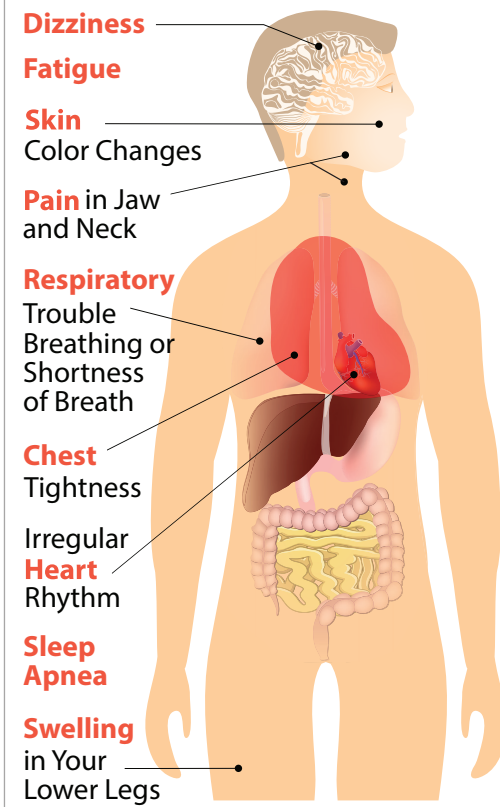
"Every patient is done by the radial approach unless there is a reason we cannot," said CHI Health Cardiologist Michael Del Core, MD, who was among the first to perform the procedure in 1999.

"The main advantage is patient comfort," Dr. Del Core said. "They don't have to remain in bed flat on their backs after the procedure. They can begin ambulation almost immediately. We have even developed a program of same-day discharge following an intervention."

There are also fewer access site complications. "This is very important because femoral complications can be life-threatening," he said.

## Ticker Troubles? Here are Some Clues

You know a crushing feeling in your chest signals a heart attack, but what about other more subtle signs something's wrong? CHI Health Cardiologist Scott Carollo, MD, lists signs to watch for:



For more, visit [CHIhealth.com/BetterYouAchyBreakyHeart](http://CHIhealth.com/BetterYouAchyBreakyHeart)

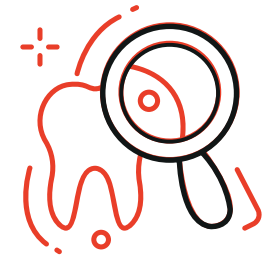
## Achy Breaky Heart

You know a bad diet, lack of exercise and too many extra pounds can take a toll on your heart.

Other culprits — ones you rarely think about — can also cause heart disease.



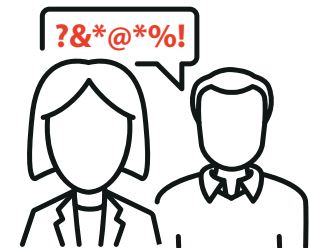
**Harmful environment.** Living near a noisy road or in a polluted area can double your risk of a heart attack.



**Gum disease.** Plaque in your mouth can mean plaque in your arteries. People with gum disease have up to a 25 percent greater risk of heart disease.



**Lousy boss.** This puts you at risk for heart disease, angina and death from heart-related causes — especially the longer you work in the stressful environment.



**Bad relationship.** Problems here can increase your risk of a heart attack by 34 percent.

## Buying Precious Time: Advanced Therapy for Heart Failure Patients



Heart failure is a serious and increasingly common condition that shortens lives.

"The prognosis of severe heart failure is as bad as any aggressive cancer," said Adnan Khalid, MD, an interventional cardiologist with CHI Health.

"More than 6 million people in the U.S. have heart failure today, and that number is expected to double by 2030." In fact:

- 600,000 new cases of heart failure are diagnosed each year and this number is growing
- 50 percent of heart failure patients will not be around in five years
- Of 100,000 patients with severe heart failure, half would not be alive in a year without advanced heart failure therapies

So what is it? Heart failure simply means your heart's ability to pump blood isn't keeping up with the demands of your body.

"It's commonly caused by blocked heart arteries or heart attacks," Dr. Khalid said. "Other common causes include excessive alcohol use, viral infection and it can sometimes happen after pregnancy."

There is hope if you're one of millions with heart failure. CHI Health has comprehensive heart failure programs and a national referral center.

"We have excellent medications that help prevent heart failure hospitalization, heal the heart and prolong life," Dr. Khalid said. "Progression to severe heart failure can be prevented with good medical therapy in the beginning."

Patients with severe heart failure also have treatment options.

"We now have advanced therapies to help patients with more severe heart failure in the form of heart assist devices and heart transplantation," Dr. Khalid said. "These therapies can prolong the life of severe heart failure patients."

For more, visit [CHIhealth.com/BetterYouHeartFailure](http://CHIhealth.com/BetterYouHeartFailure)

## Heart Failure Warning Signs

"A very specific symptom of heart failure is shortness of breath while lying down. Patients often use multiple pillows or sleep in recliners," said Adnan Khalid, MD, CHI Health interventional cardiologist.

If you experience this or any of the following symptoms of heart failure, call your primary care provider and discuss an evaluation by a cardiologist:

- Shortness of breath
- Chronic coughing or wheezing
- Buildup of fluid (edema) or swelling in the feet, legs, ankles or stomach
- Fatigue or feeling lightheaded or weak
- Nausea or lack of appetite
- Confusion or impaired thinking
- High heart rate

## I'm Taking What? Medications Your Heart Needs

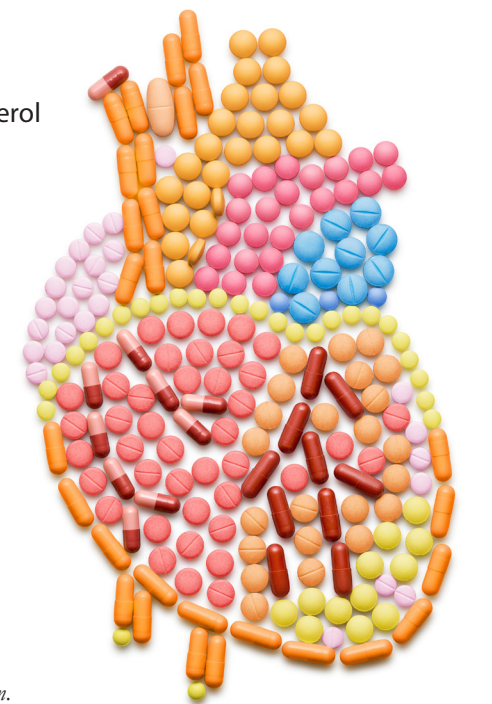
As many as half of U.S. patients do not take medications as prescribed.\* Sometimes they stop because they feel better, or they think those little pills aren't helping. Not only do medications help, they can help prevent a heart attack or stroke.

Four main types of heart meds, and what they do:

1. **Statins** — lower bad LDL cholesterol by 20 to 50 percent
2. **Clot preventers** (aspirin, Plavix, warfarin) — reduce platelet clumping and thin the blood
3. **Beta blockers** — block effects of adrenaline, which can harm the heart muscle
4. **ACE inhibitors** — prevent production of angiotensin, an artery-constricting hormone

Take your medications as prescribed, or tell your doctor immediately if for any reason you stop.

\*National Council on Patient Information and Education.







## Don't Let Vascular Disease Sneak Up on You

Few people think about their vascular health until the unthinkable occurs — a stroke.

Cardiovascular disease, among the leading causes of death in the U.S., rarely has noticeable symptoms to alert you. It often strikes without warning, according to Franz Murphy, MD, CHI Health vascular surgeon.

“Even though preventive screening is available, millions of Americans remain unaware of their risk,” Dr. Murphy said. And those risks can be devastating.

“Blocked or hardened arteries can lead to ruptured aneurysm and stroke,” Dr. Murphy said. “Vascular disease in the legs, a major indicator for heart disease, can impair circulation to the point of amputation and is associated with sudden cardiac death.”

If you're 55 years of age or older with a history of hypertension, diabetes, smoking, high cholesterol or known cardiovascular disease, you could benefit from vascular screening. “Early detection is key in prevention,” Dr. Murphy said.

### Vascular Health Screening Demystified

**Abdominal Aortic Ultrasound** — Abdominal aorta (body's main artery) and branching arteries are imaged for enlargement (aneurysm), plaque and blockage.

**Arterial Extremity Study** — Blood pressures are taken at ankle and brachial (arm and shoulder) levels and ultrasound is used to check for artery plaque and blockage.

**Carotid Doppler Study** — A painless ultrasound exam checks for plaque buildup in neck arteries that supply blood to the brain.

**Venous Doppler Study** — Ultrasound examines leg and arm veins for blood clots or evaluate leg veins for heart bypass surgery.

**Renal Duplex Ultrasound** — Examines arteries that carry blood flow to the kidneys and blood flow within kidneys.

## Sleep Deprived? Your Heart Feels It, Too



Sleep is essential for a healthy heart. One study revealed people who sleep less than six hours a night and have disturbed sleep stand a 48 percent greater chance of developing or dying from heart disease.

“We're seeing a trend of poor sleep habits and high rates of obstructive sleep apnea. This is detrimental to our health,” said Douglas Kosmicki, MD, CHI Health interventional cardiologist. “We need to form good sleep habits and treat obstructive sleep apnea if it is present. This is a necessity, especially for your heart health.”

For a healthier heart, you should get seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

Quick tips for good sleep:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day, including weekends
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, relaxing and a comfortable temperature
- Remove electronic devices (TVs, computers, smartphones) from the bedroom
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime
- Avoid tobacco/nicotine
- Get physical activity during the day — it can help you fall asleep more easily

## Chest Discomfort? How to Know if It's Serious

Not sure if it's heartburn or your heart? Call 911 immediately if you have unexplained, sudden or severe chest pain — the leading reported symptom for both heartburn and heart attack.

### Heart Burn

Additional signs of heartburn/acid reflux:



- Symptoms occur when bending over, lifting an object, lying down (especially on your back) or after meals
- Sensation of acid backing up into your throat or mouth
- Stomach fullness, upper abdominal pain, nausea
- Burping, bloating, flatulence

### Heart Attack

Additional signs of angina/heart attack:



- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

## Seven Steps Toward Heart Health

For easy ways to improve your heart health, look to the American Heart Association's “Life's Simple 7.”

Gina Mentzer MD, a CHI Health heart failure/transplant specialist, likes to take “Life's Simple 7” one step simpler.

“For me, it's eat healthy, eat less, exercise daily and know your numbers,” she said. “What people tend to do is make poor dietary choices amongst the million things they have to do and we struggle with finding time for exercise.

**“Exercise should be as important to us as a meal – we should never skip it, but we do.”**

– Dr. Mentzer

Getting 30 to 45 minutes of exercise daily is ideal, and it doesn't have to be intense cardio. Studies have shown brisk walks can produce many of the same benefits as running.

When people get busy or have a difficult time tracking their food intake, Dr. Mentzer encourages them to commit to making healthier choices, like limiting eating sweets to a few times per month and removing the salt shaker from the table.

Also essential, Dr. Mentzer said, is knowing your cholesterol and blood pressure numbers and what they mean to your heart health.

“We pay attention to road signs when we drive to avoid trouble and this is similar,” Dr. Mentzer said. “By finding out your numbers and what they mean to your heart health, you may avoid a huge ‘accident’ and live more meaningful days.”

### Life's Simple 7

The American Heart Association

- Manage Blood Pressure
- Control Cholesterol
- Reduce Blood Sugar
- Get Active
- Eat Better
- Lose Weight
- Stop Smoking

## Snack with Your Heart in Mind

Think about this, next time you grab a bag of chips.

- Salty chips cause the body to hold onto more fluid
- Extra fluid increases blood volume
- Increased blood volume forces the heart to pump harder
- Pumping harder damages the heart, leading to heart failure



Gina Mentzer, MD, a heart failure/transplant specialist for CHI Health, says the recipe for a healthy heart requires paying attention to salt, sugar and fat in our diets.

**Salt:** “Purists would say consume less than 2 grams per day,” Dr. Mentzer said. A first step? Take the salt shaker off the table.

**Sugar:** “Try to reduce the simple sugars in your diet with the exception of an occasional treat,” Dr. Mentzer said. “So when you sit down to lunch, you can decide between having the roll or the cake — not both.”

**Fat:** “Your body needs fat for good brain function, but it only needs a certain amount,” Dr. Mentzer said. “Unfortunately, we all tend to like the bad fats that can be found in red meat or deep-fried foods. We can get good fat from things like avocados and nuts, especially walnuts.”

For more, visit [CHIhealth.com/BetterYouSodium](http://CHIhealth.com/BetterYouSodium)

## Get the Digits for Heart Health

When should you know your cholesterol numbers? Sooner than you'd think.

Late teens or early 20s, according to Ajay Chander, MD, a CHI Health interventional cardiologist.

“It's a case of the earlier the better,” Dr. Chander said. “If people don't come to us until their 30s or 40s, they've potentially lost 20 years of being able to prevent plaque buildup.”

An individual with no documented heart disease should aim for an LDL level below 100 and an HDL level above 40 (preferably above 50). Those with heart disease should target an LDL of less than 70, which typically requires the help of medication.

“Most people think they can control it with their diet when, in fact, only 20 to 30 percent of your cholesterol numbers can be influenced by your diet,” Dr. Chander said.

### Target ranges for individuals with no heart disease:

LDL (Bad Cholesterol) Below 100

HDL (Good Cholesterol) 40 - 50+

For more, visit [CHIhealth.com/BetterYouDigits](http://CHIhealth.com/BetterYouDigits)



# A Serious Condition Many of Us Don't Know We Have

One in four babies is born with a kind of hole in the heart called a patent foramen ovale (PFO). It's a flap that doesn't close properly after birth.

Although PFOs are common, most people never know they have the condition and never need any kind of treatment. It's often discovered during tests for other problems.

**But PFOs can become serious or life-threatening if small blood clots move through the flap, travel to the brain and cause a stroke.**

In the past, doctors had trouble identifying the cause of the stroke. Today they know cryptogenic strokes (of unknown origin and accounting for 30 percent of strokes in young people) are caused by PFOs. These strokes usually occur in people who are younger than 55 years of age.

PFOs also can cause problems in patients who are scuba diving or skydiving — activities that can cause a blood clot to move through the PFO to the brain, resulting in stroke.

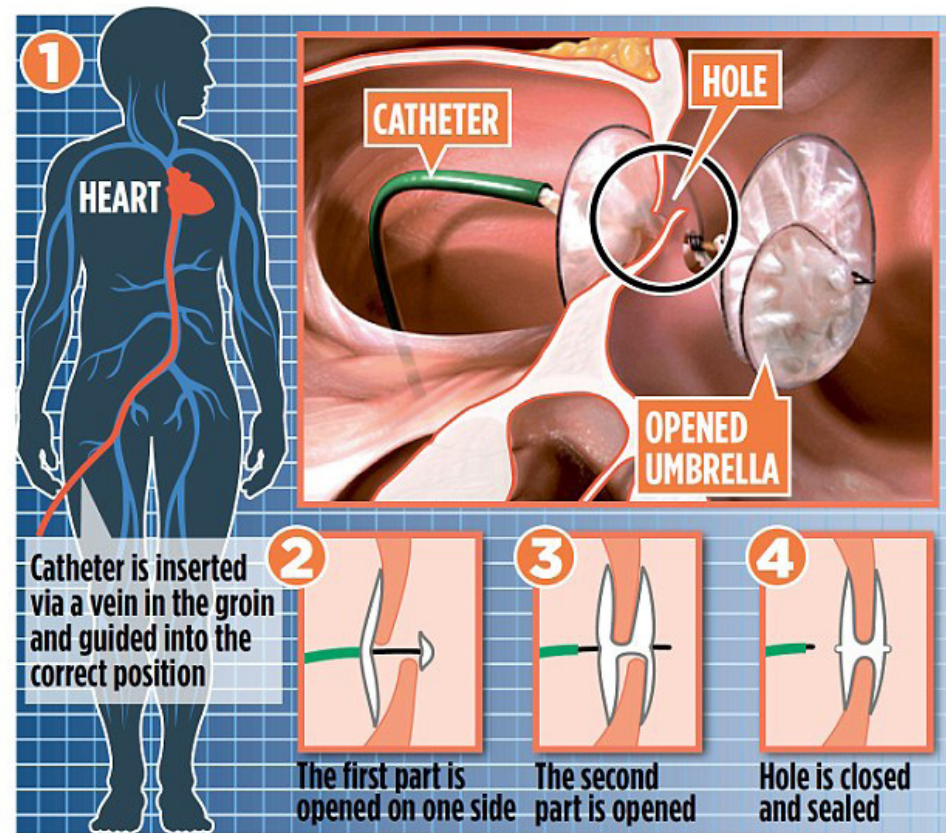
Once the PFO is discovered — usually after a stroke — an elite team of CHI Health cardiologists is specially trained to close the hole with a special device.

With the patient under local anesthesia, the cardiologist inserts an FDA-approved device through a tiny puncture in the groin and closes the flap in the heart.

The entire procedure takes less than 30 minutes.

More is now understood about PFOs, including their relationship to certain types of migraines.

CHI Health Cardiologist Himanshu Agarwal, MD, took part in a prestigious PFO migraine trial which looked at whether closing the hole can treat migraines in young women. CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center — Bergan Mercy is one of only three sites in the Midwest to be invited to participate in the trial.



## Happy Hour, Happy Heart?

Want to lower your risk of heart attack, stroke and cardiovascular disease by 40 percent? It's possible if you're a moderate drinker.

That's from a Harvard School of Public Health review of 100 studies dealing with alcohol intake and heart disease.

Studies show that alcohol in moderation can increase your HDL ("good") cholesterol, reduce risk of blood clots and reduce inflammation, which plays a role in heart attacks.

The key is moderation — no more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women. A drink is 12 ounces of beer, 4 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof spirits. Research shows the more alcohol a person drinks, the higher the danger of high blood pressure, stroke, obesity and dependence.

# Silent Heart Attack: Is Your Ticker a Time Bomb?

More than 1 million people in the U.S. have heart attacks each year and 45 percent of those heart attacks are silent — meaning they seem to exhibit no symptoms.

That means some 450,000 people each year have a heart attack without realizing it.

The phenomenon known as the "silent heart attack" is more common in men and more deadly in women.

What if that silent heart attack wasn't so quiet and simply went unrecognized.

"Remember that night when you ate too much Mexican food and sat up all night with indigestion? Or that day when you felt lousy and thought you may have had the flu? That could have been the moment a vessel closed off and a heart attack occurred," said Eric Van De Graaff, MD, CHI Health cardiologist.

Vague symptoms pass and the moment is forgotten — until a routine electrocardiogram (EKG) turns up evidence of a previous blockage. That diagnosis is essential because a silent heart attack can triple a person's risk of dying from heart disease.

Once your doctor knows damage has occurred, protective therapies like statins, aspirins and blood pressure medications can be started.

"If you have risk factors for coronary disease — high blood pressure, high cholesterol, family history of early disease, tobacco use, diabetes — and suffer symptoms that you remotely think might be cardiac in nature you need to get it checked out," Dr. Van De Graaff said.



## Men Versus Women: A Game You Can't Afford to Lose

This battle of the sexes starts with a tie: Heart disease is the No. 1 cause of death for both genders.

"In the past, women probably received less aggressive care, but that isn't true anymore," said CHI Health Cardiologist Ann Narmi, MD.

That doesn't mean the playing field is completely level. Differences between the genders:

- Men are more likely to experience a "classic" blockage and complete stop of blood flow

- Women more often have smaller clots and subtle stop of blood flow
- Men tend toward the "Hollywood Heart attack" with crushing chest pain
- Women more frequently experience atypical symptoms like jaw pain or nausea

How everyone can win? "Exercise regularly. Eat a healthy diet. Listen to your body and call 911 right away if you have heart attack symptoms," Dr. Narmi said.

## Lights, Sirens, Lifesavers

You're having heart attack symptoms. Quick, how do you get to the hospital?

- A) Call 911
- B) Find a ride
- C) Drive yourself

Half of all sudden cardiac deaths occur outside the hospital, so choosing "A" might save your life. But as many as 70 percent of heart attack sufferers find a ride or drive themselves.

An ambulance gets you there quicker and paramedics can:

- Deliver oxygen, aspirin and nitroglycerin
- Start EKG monitoring and transmit data to the hospital
- Perform CPR and defibrillation, if needed

"Calling 911 will get you to the hospital faster and safer, and decrease the time it takes to unblock your clogged artery and reduce heart damage when you get there," said Jeffrey Carstens, MD, CHI Health cardiologist.

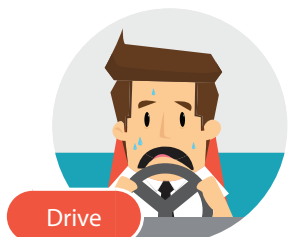
For more, visit [CHIhealth.com/BetterYouAttackSigns](http://CHIhealth.com/BetterYouAttackSigns)



Call 911



Find a Ride



Drive

**Myth:** Sneezing stops your heart.

**Fact:** Sneezing won't stop your heart's electrical activity, but sneezing-related pressure changes in your chest can momentarily and harmlessly affect blood flow.

**Myth:** I'd know if I had high blood pressure.

**Fact:** It's called a silent killer because high blood pressure often has no noticeable signs and symptoms like headaches are often overlooked.

**Myth:** Laughter is good for your heart.

**Fact:** Giggles and chuckles help balance stress hormones, reduce artery inflammation and increase good cholesterol.

## Myth-busting the heart

## It Matters Where You Go if You're Having a Heart Attack

If you suspect you're having heart troubles - even a heart attack - rest assured CHI Health hospitals are uniquely prepared to care for you.

- **CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center – Bergan Mercy:** One of the top 49 U.S. hospitals for low heart attack mortality rates (Becker's Hospital Review).
- **CHI Health Nebraska Heart:** Five-star Hospital Compare award, three-star

rating (highest available) from The Society of Thoracic Surgeons for bypass surgery with a valve replacement.

- **CHI Health St. Francis in Grand Island:** Mission: Lifeline Achievement Award from the American Heart Association for 2016, pulmonary rehabilitation program certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation in 2015.
- **CHI Health Good Samaritan Kearney:** State's first accredited Chest Pain Center, accredited in Primary PCI (type of angioplasty), received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline EMS Silver Award, State's first accredited Chest Pain Center, accredited in Primary PCI (type of angioplasty) and received the American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline EMS Silver Award.

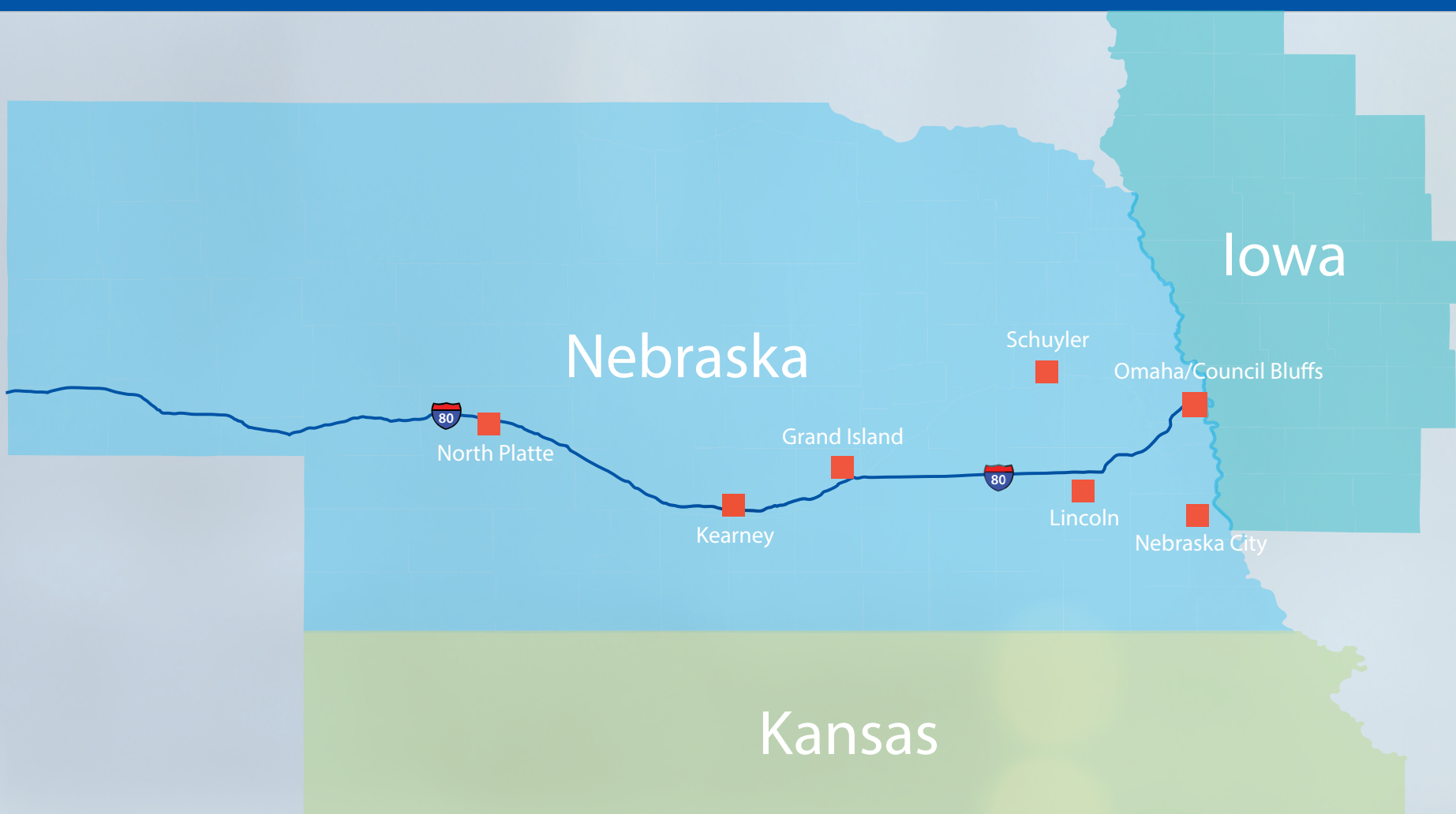




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# CHI Health Heart



## Hospital Locations

### NEBRASKA

#### Grand Island

CHI Health St. Francis

#### Kearney

CHI Health Good Samaritan

#### Lincoln

CHI Health St. Elizabeth  
 CHI Health Nebraska Heart

#### Nebraska City

CHI Health St. Marys

#### Omaha

CHI Health Creighton University  
 Medical Center - Bergan Mercy  
 CHI Health Immanuel  
 CHI Health Lakeside  
 CHI Health Midlands

#### Schuyler

CHI Health Schuyler

### IOWA

#### Corning

CHI Health Mercy

#### Council Bluffs

CHI Health Mercy

## For CHI Health Heart Care, call:

**Omaha:** (402) 875-4675

**Lincoln:** (402) 810-8593

**Grand Island:** (308) 365-1871

**Kearney:** (308) 365-1520