

Christos Fragopoulos

## Hypothermia Protocol Preserves Life, Function After Massive Cardiac Event

When Christos Fragopoulos, a greeter at Walmart, collapsed at work with a heart attack in July 2015, bystanders performed CPR and called 911, and Fragopoulos was taken by ambulance to Cookeville Regional.

He had a cardiac catheterization, an angioplasty and a stent, and then, for the next 24 hours, he was heavily sedated while his body temperature was lowered to 91.4 degrees F.

It was part of Cookeville Regional's hypothermia protocol, designed to help preserve optimal organ function in cardiac arrest patients by rapidly cooling the body for 24 hours to help prevent further injury, and then slowly, over 16 hours, bringing it back up to normal temperature.

The hypothermia protocol is used on patients who have lost consciousness and a pulse and have required CPR.

"If you have a patient who's not waking up and responding after an arrest, there may be a neurological insult, so what you may potentially have without the cooling is decreased memory, decreased cognition or decreased mental status," said Teresa Jones, ICU and CVICU director at Cookeville Regional.

Recently, Cookeville Regional purchased new equipment that allows them to cool the patient even more quickly, with uninterrupted cooling throughout various procedures and location

transfers. The cooling vest is constructed so that it doesn't have to be removed for procedures such as cardiac catheterization, and it's radiolucent, meaning X-rays can be done through the vest.

"They say for every hour you delay cooling, you're looking at a 20-percent increase in mortality," said Jamie Deneau, CVICU clinical nurse specialist. "That was one of the reasons we wanted to make sure we were on top of getting these patients cooled as quickly as possible."

With their injury process arrested and neurological function preserved, patients who require the hypothermia protocol have much better outcomes in terms of quality of life following their heart attack.

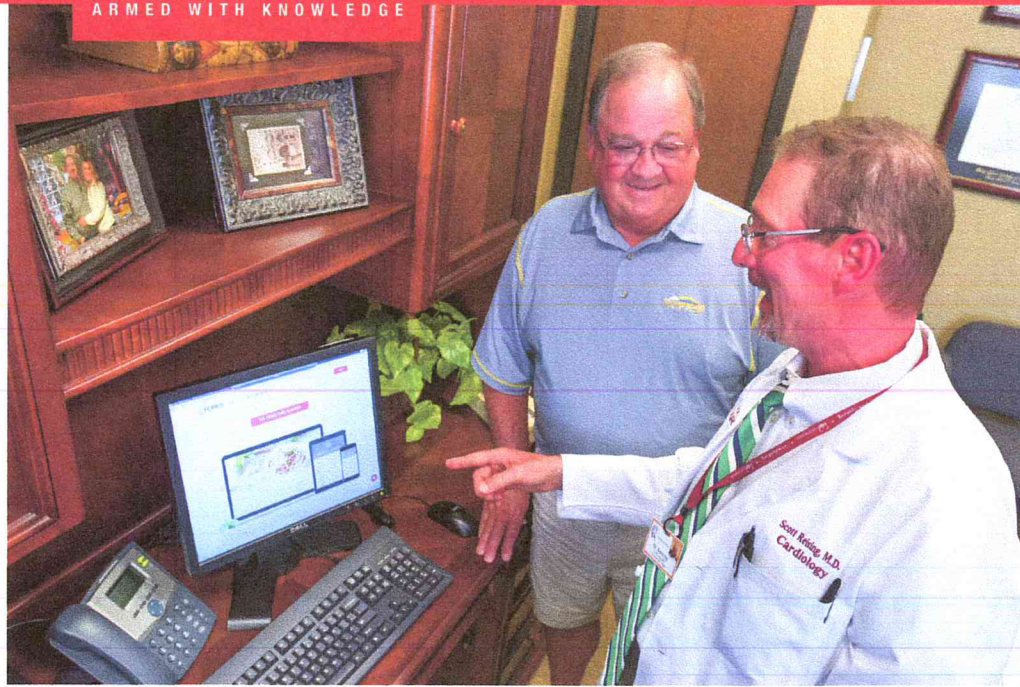
"We're committed to offering comprehensive care for heart attack and cardiac arrest patients, and this is just another tool we have to take better care of them," said Dr. Thomas Little, a cardiologist with Tennessee Heart.

The protocol definitely made a difference for Fragopoulos, who today is more active than ever before. He's back at work and is working out six days a week.

"I'm exercising all the time now, and I'm in better shape than before," said Fragopoulos. "I work out in the morning, then go get my supper and go to work. I have so much more strength now. This has saved my life."



**THE COOLING VEST IS CONSTRUCTED SO THAT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE REMOVED FOR PROCEDURES.**



Dr. Scott Reising shows heart patient Pete Cahill some of the heart-healthy recipes available at [forksoverknives.com](http://forksoverknives.com).

## Patient Transforms His Health Through Diet, Exercise

As unpleasant as a heart attack can be, sometimes it sets patients on a path to a whole new way of living. That was true for Pete Cahill, whose health crisis led him to Dr. Scott Reising, a cardiologist with a special interest in heart attack prevention through nutrition.

For patients who are willing to work to improve their health, Dr. Reising orders a lab profile that shows 50 different factors that reveal their overall health and risk for disease.

"The results come in this pamphlet that explains every one of the markers and what level it should be at," said Cahill. "Then you know exactly what a particular marker being in the red zone means to you and your body."

Dr. Reising then begins working with the

patient to improve those results, encouraging exercise and helping his patients transition to a whole-food, plant-based diet to decrease their risk of heart disease and other chronic illnesses.

"It's about eating whole food in the natural state and not all of this processed food, and trying to replace animal protein with plant protein," he said.

Armed with the information he received from Dr. Reising, Cahill reduced his LDL cholesterol from 126 to 59, more than a 50 percent reduction, and had also greatly improved many of his other troubling health stats within just a few months.

Cahill's wife, Carol, was so excited to see her husband doing better that she became a

patient of Dr. Reising's, as well.

"I want to be proactive instead of reactive," she said. "The lab results showed that I have issues, too, so it's a good thing I got it checked."

Dr. Reising says he hopes to find more patients like the Cahills who are willing to work with him to transform their health.

"The tendency of coronary disease is toward more stents, more heart attacks, more strokes ... it tends to be a progressive disease," said Dr. Reising. "But when you start implementing these changes, that doesn't have to be your future."

To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet and the studies that support it, visit [nutritionfacts.org](http://nutritionfacts.org) or [forksoverknives.com](http://forksoverknives.com).