

# Healthy Directions

## Brothers share lots of 'heart'

Mercy physician treats identical arrhythmias

**TREVOR PEZLEY**, oldest son of Michelle and David Pezley of Donnellson, Iowa, had shortness of breath, light-headedness and a racing heartbeat while playing basketball.

"My husband and I—and Trevor's coaches—thought he just needed to 'suck it up' and work out harder," says Michelle Pezley.

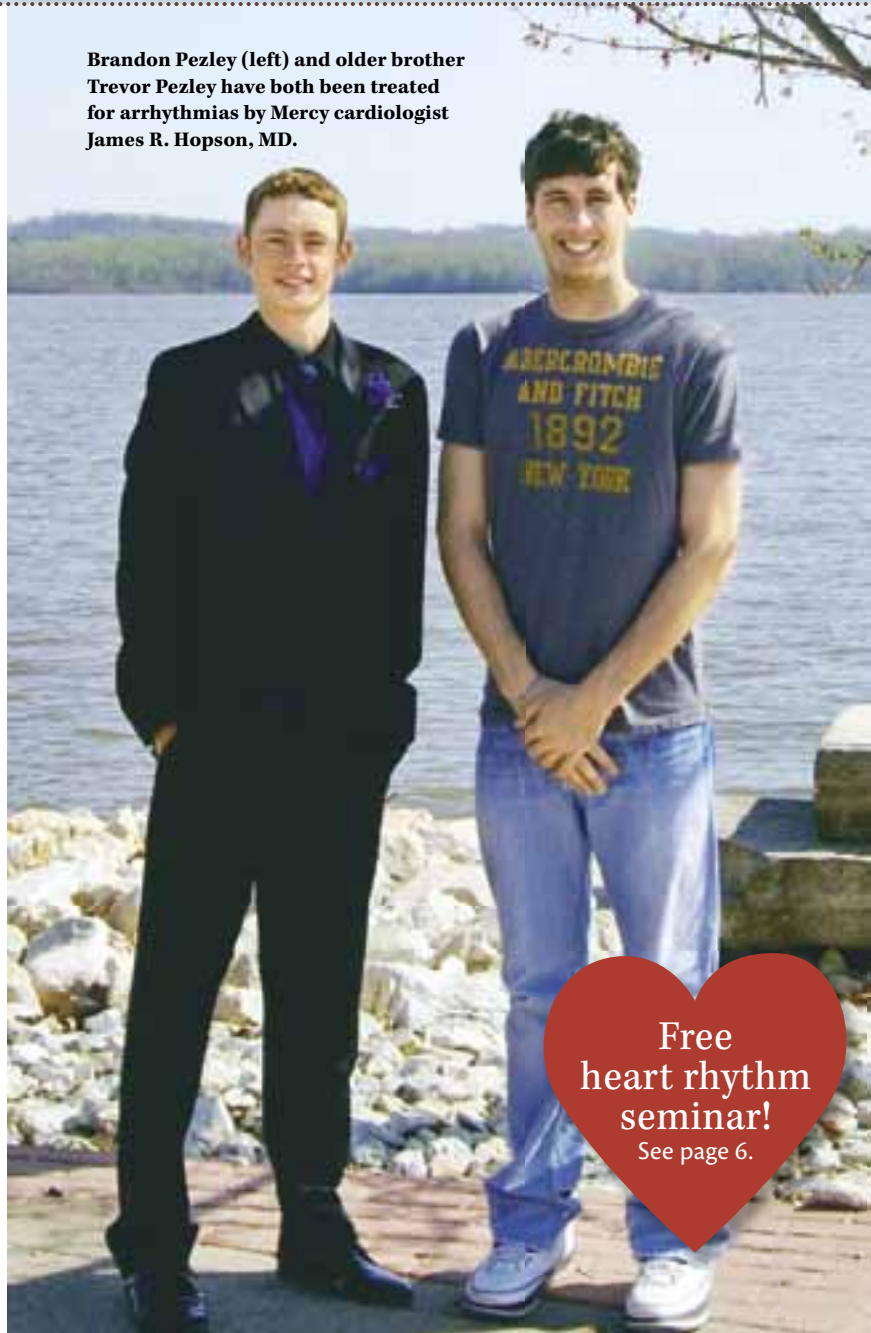
Trevor was an active college athlete and a freshman at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Mo.—not the typical heart patient. But then he passed out during class. Around the same time, another incident made the Pezleys rethink Trevor's health.

"When [Trevor's brother] Brandon's friend died of an enlarged heart," Michelle says, "we thought, maybe we better get this checked out."

Trevor saw his family doctor and had an EKG and an echocardiogram. He also wore a Holter monitor, which gave doctors a 24-hour snapshot of his heart activity.

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Brandon Pezley (left) and older brother Trevor Pezley have both been treated for arrhythmias by Mercy cardiologist James R. Hopson, MD.



Free heart rhythm seminar!

See page 6.

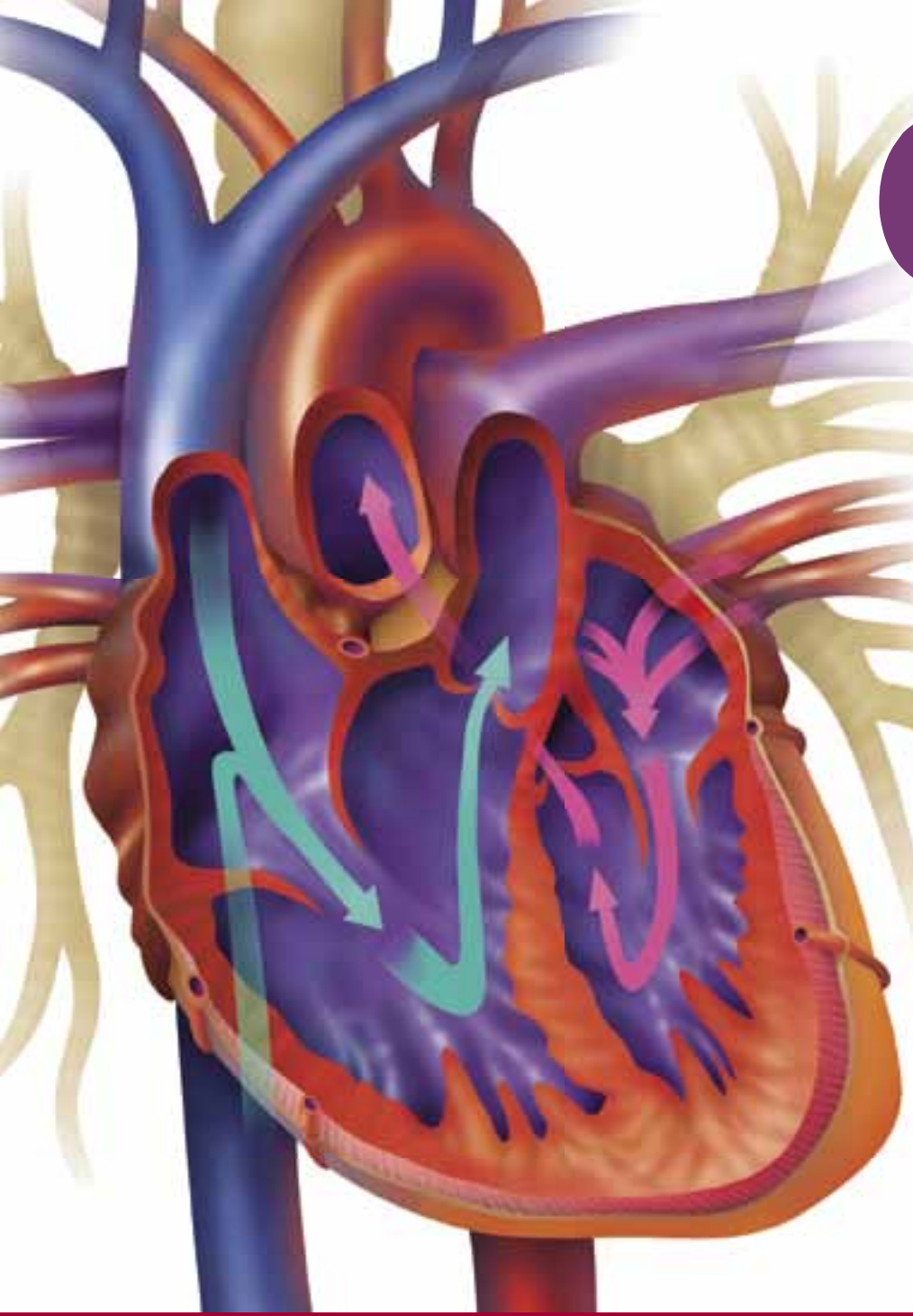
Need a physician? Call Mercy On Call at 319-358-2767 or toll-free at 800-358-2767 seven days a week.

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# GET

## Rapid heartbeats



**EACH HEART** has its own normal rhythm brought about by the seamless flow of electrical impulses that begins in the heart's natural "pace-maker" (sinus node).

The electricity flows through the upper chambers (atria), crosses the bridge between upper and lower chambers (atrioventricular node) and travels to the lower chambers (ventricles).

This passage of electricity culminates in a carefully coordinated contraction of heart muscle that pushes blood throughout the human body.

Each day, a normal heart contracts about 100,000 times, at a rate anywhere from 60 to 100 times a minute. Changes in rate brought about by variations in activity, diet, medication and age are normal and common. During intense exercise, a heart may speed up to 160 to 180 or more beats a minute. Running up a

Mercy cardiologists treat a full range of heart issues. For a referral,

 **MOST  
COMMON**  
 **RAPID  
HEARTBEAT**

More than 2 million people in the United States experience atrial fibrillation, making it the most common heart rhythm disorder. In AF, or A Fib, the heartbeat is irregular and rapid. The upper chambers, or atria, may beat as often as 400 times a minute, about four times faster than normal. Although it isn't life-threatening, A Fib can lead to other rhythm problems, chronic fatigue and congestive heart failure. Chances of having a stroke are five times higher for those with A Fib than for those without A Fib.

# RYTHM

range from harmless to life-threatening

flight of stairs or being startled by a noise account for normal increases in heart rates as well. The rapid-fire contractions in all these situations are faster than the “normal” resting range, yet they pose no danger.

When a heart begins to race for no apparent reason, however, it can be a sign of an abnormality in the electrical pathway and is cause for evaluation. Abnormal rapid heart rates can range from 100 beats a minute up to 400 beats a minute and be relatively harmless or life-threatening.

## Symptoms

When the heart beats too quickly, the ventricles do not have enough time to fill with blood and cannot effectively pump blood to the rest of the body. The lack of oxygen can prove deadly and gives rise to the following symptoms:

- Heart skipping a beat
- Beating out of rhythm
- Palpitations
- Rapid heart action

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Light-headedness
- Blackouts
- Temporary blind spots
- Fainting or near fainting
- Chaotic, quivering or irregular rhythm
- Death

## Types of arrhythmias

Understanding some common terms in the language of cardiac arrhythmias helps sort through the types of rhythm problems. An arrhythmia is any abnormality in heart rhythm. Arrhythmias are categorized in three main ways:

**Rate.** If the heart rate is rapid, or greater than 100 beats a minute, it is considered a tachycardia. Alternatively, a slow heart rate, below 60 beats a minute, is known as a bradycardia.

**Location.** The location of the problematic electrical circuit helps define the arrhythmia. For instance,

a rhythm is called supraventricular if it originates above the ventricles (lower chambers). So, the problem is most likely in the upper chambers (atria). It follows that a ventricular arrhythmia is the result of a problem in the lower chambers.

**Irregular.** The nature of the heart-beat, whether it is steady or chaotic, is another key to categorizing an arrhythmia. A rapid beat that is irregular and chaotic may be a type of fibrillation, or quivering beat.

## Who develops rapid heartbeats?

Anyone can develop a rapid heart-beat, even someone young without a previous heart problem. However, problems are more common in those:

- With previous heart trouble
- Who have suffered damage caused by a heart attack, cardiac surgery or other conditions
- With rare, inherited heart defects

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call Mercy on Call at 319-358-2767 or 800-358-2767.

## MOST DANGEROUS RAPID HEART RHYTHMS

Sudden rapid heartbeats originating in the ventricles are the most dangerous arrhythmias. Ventricular tachycardia, a rapid yet steady beat, is dangerous in its own right. Worse, it can turn into ventricular fibrillation, or VF, which is characterized by irregular and chaotic rapid heartbeats. Because the fibrillating ventricular muscle cannot contract and pump blood to the brain and vital organs, VF is the number one cause of sudden cardiac death. Without immediate emergency treatment of an electric shock to restore normal rhythm, an individual loses consciousness within seconds and dies within minutes.





# Tasty ways to pump up your potassium power

**ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH** potassium? If you're like most people, the answer is probably no.

Many adults consume considerably less than the 4,700 milligrams of potassium a day recommended by federal dietary guidelines, according to the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR).

Potassium is an important mineral that's abundant in many plant foods. Among its many benefits, potassium:

- Serves as a counterbalance to sodium (salt) in your diet. This helps you maintain normal blood pressure, and it may also lower your risk of stroke.
- Helps protect your bones from osteoporosis and helps lower your risk for developing kidney stones.

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables is a good way to boost your potassium intake. Potassium-rich fruits include bananas, cantaloupe, grapefruit, oranges, honeydew melons and tomatoes. Tomato and prune juices are also high in potassium.

Kidney beans, potatoes and leafy green vegetables are good sources of potassium too. But don't boil these vegetables in large amounts of water—it will leech them of potassium.

If you're considering taking a potassium supplement, talk to your doctor first. Excess potassium is usually excreted in urine. However, your body may retain too much potassium if your kidneys aren't working properly or if you're taking certain medicines, cautions the AICR. Too much potassium can trigger abnormal heart rhythms.

## Get fresh!



Here's a tasty fruit salad recipe from Mercy Executive Chef Ron Hall

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium oranges, peeled
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 green apple
- 1 banana
- 1 kiwi
- ½ cup grapes
- ½ cup blackberries
- 1 teaspoon Equal (3 packets)

### INSTRUCTIONS

Cut the fruit in larger, bite-sized pieces. Combine all of the ingredients in the order listed. Stir gently after each addition. Serve chilled. Yields 8 servings.

Note: Always start with a citrus fruit; its juice will keep fruit like apples and bananas from browning. Add the most fragile fruit, like berries, last.

Nutritional information: 58 calories, 15.9g total carbs, 3.7g dietary fiber, 10.5g sugars, 0.3g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0.3g unsaturated fat, 51.2mg potassium, 0.6g protein, 0.1mg sodium. Dietary exchange: 1 fruit.



● Executive Chef Ron Hall

## A place to heal

JULY OPENING PLANNED  
FOR MERCY WOUND CENTER

Mercy Iowa City will open a comprehensive wound-care clinic with hyperbaric oxygen therapy in July. To this end, Mercy is partnering with Accelecare, an company experienced in the field of wound care. Darwin Peterson, DO, general surgery, will be the medical director of the center.

The Mercy Wound Center will be located on the main level of the hospital and will bring a team of physicians, nurses and technicians to the treatment and care of people with complex wounds.

## Mercy stroke care recognized



Mercy Iowa City has received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines—Stroke Bronze Performance Achievement Award. The award recognizes Mercy's success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke

patients receive treatment according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations.

"With a stroke, time lost is brain lost, and this award addresses the important element of time," says Cindy Penney, Mercy's Vice President of Nursing.

Mercy has developed a comprehensive system for quickly diagnosing and treating stroke patients admitted to its emergency department. This includes being equipped to provide brain imaging scans, having neurologists available to conduct evaluations and using clot-busting medications when appropriate.

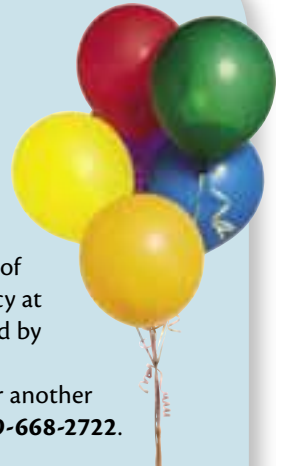
"The time is right for us to focus on the quality of stroke care by implementing these guidelines," Penney says. "The number of stroke patients eligible for treatment is expected to grow over the next decade due to increasing stroke incidence and a large aging population."

## Williamsburg welcomes new health care provider

*Leck Read, MD*, has joined the staff of Mercy Services Williamsburg, located at 819 S. Highland.

Dr. Read received his medical education from the University of South Florida College of Medicine in 1989 and completed his residency at the University of Florida. He is board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine.

To make an appointment with Dr. Read or another health care provider in Williamsburg, call **319-668-2722**.



## Muscatine welcomes visiting specialists

Mercy Family Medicine of Muscatine is pleased to announce that two Mercy specialists will see patients in their offices on a regular basis.



● Jill Goodman, MD

*Jill Goodman, MD*, of OB/GYN

Associates of Iowa City and Coralville, will see patients in the Muscatine office on Wednesday mornings. Appointments with Dr. Goodman can be scheduled by calling **319-337-3193**.

*Ron Oren, MD*,

of Mercy Specialty Clinics, Cardiovascular Disease, will see patients

in Muscatine on Wednesday afternoons. Dr. Oren specializes in heart failure, pulmonary hypertension and general cardiology. Appointments with Dr. Oren can be scheduled by calling **319-688-7800**.



● Ron Oren, MD

## Want to find the Mercy doctor who suits your needs?

Just call Mercy On Call at

**319-358-2767** or toll-free at

**800-358-2767** or visit

[www.FindAMercyDoctor.com](http://www.FindAMercyDoctor.com).





## FINDING SUPPORT

### ONGOING SUPPORT GROUPS

Call Mercy On Call for dates, topics and locations.

- ✓ Breath of Fresh Air (for people living with chronic lung disease)
- ✓ Cardiac Support Group
- ✓ Continuing After Breast Cancer
- ✓ Diabetes Support Group
- ✓ Hope Cancer Support Group
- ✓ Sleep Apnea Support Group
- ✓ Stroke Group

## HEALTHY LIVING

### SMOKE STOPPERS

Offered as a one-on-one program with a respiratory therapist. Smoke Stoppers helps you quit in three phases: the countdown, learning to stop and staying smoke-free. Call Mercy On Call for more information.

# TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

For more information or to register, call Mercy On Call at 319-358-2767 or toll-free at 800-358-2767.



Register and pay for Mercy classes online at [www.mercyiowacity.org](http://www.mercyiowacity.org).

## FOR THE COMMUNITY

### CORAL WEST HEALTH CENTER **OPEN HOUSE**

Sunday, July 17, noon to 4 p.m.  
2769 Heartland Drive, Coralville

Come see this convenient new location for OB/GYN Associates, the new Mercy Urgent Care West, Mercy Occupational Medicine, Mercy Internal Medicine, Radiologic Medical Services and Progressive Rehab Associates. Tours and refreshments will be provided. Bring the family!

### Your heart and vascular health **SESSION 1**

### HEART RHYTHM UPDATE: A PRIMER ON MATTERS OF CARDIAC RHYTHM



Saturday, Aug. 13, starting at 8:45 a.m.,  
Mercy atrium, free

This community seminar is presented by cardiologist/electrophysiologist James R. Hopson, MD. Dr. Hopson will discuss the most common types of arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythms) and their treatment. Refreshments will be provided. Call Mercy On Call to reserve your seat.





YOUR GROWING FAMILY *Call Mercy On Call for dates and to register.*

**FREE** EASING THROUGH PREGNANCY

Sept. 21 and Nov. 15, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A one-session class providing information and comfort measures to parents-to-be for the physical and emotional changes during the first and second trimesters of pregnancy.

**FREE** CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION

Tuesdays, June 7 and 14, July 5 and 12, Aug. 2 and 9, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A two-session class for couples during the third trimester of pregnancy. This class addresses labor, delivery and car seat safety and includes a tour of Mercy's Birth Care Unit.

CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

Evenings, fee varies with format

- ✓ Monday classes start Sept. 19 and Nov. 7
- ✓ Wednesday classes start July 6, Aug. 24 and Oct. 19

This five-week class addresses comfort, relaxation and breathing techniques for labor and delivery, vaginal and cesarean delivery, baby care, safety, and parenting. Includes a tour of Mercy's Birth Care Unit. Taught by registered nurses who are certified childbirth educators.

**NEW** LABOR AND DELIVERY BASICS

Fridays and Saturdays, July 15 and 16, Sept. 9 and 10, Nov. 18 and 19, McAuley Room, lower level, Mercy Medical Plaza, \$45

- ✓ 7 to 9 p.m. on Fridays
- ✓ 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays

Taught by registered nurses who are certified childbirth educators.

BEGINNING WITH BABY

Sundays, July 24, Sept. 11, and Nov. 13, 1 to 4:30 p.m., McAuley Room, lower level, Mercy Medical Plaza, \$15 per family

This one-session class addresses bringing baby home and "now what?" questions. Covers baby care, new responsibilities, parenting concerns and safety.

**FREE** NEW BROTHER/NEW SISTER

Mondays, June 6, July 11, Aug. 1, and Sept. 19, 6 p.m. and 7:15 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

This one-session class helps children ages 3 to 12 prepare for the arrival of a new baby.

**FREE** CAR SEAT SAFETY

Sept. 26 and Nov. 14, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A one-session class to help parents understand Iowa car seat safety laws, car seat use and types of car seats. (Does not replace car seat checks.)

**FREE** PUT SAFETY FIRST

Tuesdays, Sept. 27 and Nov. 22, 7 to 9 p.m., classroom 4, Mercy Hospital

A one-session class for parents and grandparents about childproofing strategies and home and personal safety.

HAPPIEST BABY ON THE BLOCK

July 18, Sept. 26 and Nov. 20  
Call Mercy On Call for times, \$30

New babies are a blessing, but they can also bring sleepless nights and stress. This one-session class is based on pediatrician Dr. Harvey Karp's approach to baby care. Topics include the fourth trimester, the calming reflex, the five S's and cuddle care. May be taken before or after your baby is born.

INFANT MASSAGE

Sundays, beginning July 10, Sept. 11, and Oct. 16, call Mercy On Call for times, \$30 per family

A three-session class for parents and their 2-week-old to 7-month-old babies. Parents learn how to massage, soothe and relax their babies and to help little ones sleep. Taught by a certified infant massage instructor. Babies welcome!

BREASTFEEDING CLASS

June 29, Aug. 10, Sept. 26, and Oct. 26, first floor conference room, Mercy Hospital, call Mercy On Call for times and more dates, \$10

A one-session class for expectant mothers. A support person is welcome to attend at no extra cost.

**FREE** BREASTFEEDING AND MORE

Thursdays, noon to 2 p.m., McAuley Room, lower level, Mercy Medical Plaza

An informal group offering support and friendship to new mothers. No registration needed.

HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

HEALTHY DIRECTIONS is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of MERCY HOSPITAL, 500 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA 52245, telephone 319-339-0300, website [www.mercyiowacity.org](http://www.mercyiowacity.org).

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Answers over the phone

Whatever your health care need, Mercy On Call can help.

The experienced registered nurses of Mercy On Call have information about a wide array of community resources.

Just call 319-358-2767  
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Main hospital number: 319-339-0300



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## OUR MISSION

Mercy Iowa City heals and comforts the sick and works to improve the health of the community in the spirit of Jesus Christ and the Catholic tradition of the Sisters of Mercy.



James R.  
Hopson, MD

Questions about heart rhythm? Learn more at a free seminar on Aug. 13. Turn to page 6 for details.

# Brothers share lots of 'heart'

Continued from front page

"While Trevor was sleeping, his heart was racing up to 250 beats per minute," Michelle says.

The Pezleys were immediately referred to Mercy cardiologist James R. Hopson, MD. Dr. Hopson specializes in *cardiac electrophysiology*, a field that deals with the heart's electrical system and with abnormal rhythms, or *arrhythmias*.

Trevor was diagnosed with supraventricular tachycardia (SVT), a rapid heart-beat that originates in a particular area of the heart. The source was mapped during invasive electrophysiology testing and *ablated* successfully.

"I am not sure that I have seen another [arrhythmia] quite like it, in terms of location and behavior," Dr. Hopson says.

After Trevor's diagnosis, Brandon admitted that he too had been having what he called "funny heartbeats." A high school junior and basketball player, Brandon

was evaluated and also found to have SVT. In fact, it was identical to Trevor's in both behavior and location. Brandon also underwent cardiac ablation, and the brothers are now doing well and are able to exercise without limitation.

Although ablation is an attractive option for many arrhythmias, it was especially so for the Pezley brothers. As athletes, "they wouldn't have responded well to medicine," says Dr. Hopson. "Ablation was the only option that would provide them a medication-free cure."

Both Trevor and Brandon had great outcomes.

"It would take me out of the game," says Brandon. "Now Coach keeps me in."

Trevor, who is studying to become an athletic trainer, advises people to listen to their bodies.

"I didn't know I had a heart condition," he says. "If you think something's wrong, don't put it off. Have it checked out."

## Catheter ablation

# One possible treatment for arrhythmias

Catheter ablation is a procedure in which thin tubes, called catheters, are threaded into the heart. The catheters allow recordings of the heart's electrical activity to be obtained and sources of abnormal heart rhythms to be localized, or mapped. Once mapped, these small areas of heart muscle are *ablated* with

either electrical heating or intense cooling. This eliminates the source of the abnormal rhythm.

"The area being ablated is very small, an aspect that allows the procedure to be safe, but which requires somewhat detailed and careful mapping," explains Mercy cardiologist James R. Hopson, MD.

