



View of Bendixen's Heart and Internal Organs

## RYAN BENDIXEN: HUSBAND, FATHER, MOUNTAINEER, CONQUERS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

In 1990, at 20 years old, Ryan Bendixen felt that he was on top of the world. A member of an elite unit of the Army, the Littleton, Colorado resident had just learned he would be shipped off to serve in the Gulf War. However, during a physical he was diagnosed with high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) which unfortunately led to his honorable discharge.

### The Impact of High Blood Pressure

The news was devastating for this extremely active athlete, whose favorite past times included mountain climbing, running and playing rugby. "Here I was at the prime of my life — I didn't feel or look sick — yet I was being told by doctors that I was seriously ill," says Bendixen. "The news really threw me into a funk, I stopped doing the things I love to do and I turned into a bit of a couch potato." During the next few years, Bendixen took medication for his condition but was often lax and did not always comply with his high blood pressure treatment regimen. "My wake-up call came when my doctor told me he had seen younger, otherwise healthy men die of strokes and heart attacks because they did not take their high blood pressure seriously."

### Working With Your Doctor

Motivated by this warning, Bendixen began to resume a healthier lifestyle. Working closely with his physician he identified the best treatment plan to put his high blood pressure in its place — under control. His physician prescribed a Novartis high blood pressure medication, which along with an active lifestyle, has worked for him for five years now.

### Climbing to New Heights

Bendixen, dedicated to maintaining a healthy blood pressure goal with his doctor, joined Novartis' *Blood Pressure Success Zone*, a new program to help others with high blood pressure get their blood pressure under control. In September 2004, he enthusiastically volunteered to partake in Novartis' new initiative with Anatomical Travelogue, a producer of stunning 3D visualizations based on data from real people. Bendixen spent a day with Anatomical Travelogue being scanned via various imaging technologies so that they could develop images of his cardiovascular system. These images can be viewed online at [www.SeeYourBP.com](http://www.SeeYourBP.com). They also serve as the center piece of a new book, "The InVision Guide to a Healthy Heart," which educates people on the real life damage caused by high blood pressure.

Today, as a husband, father and successful businessman, Bendixen is training to realize a life-long dream by attempting to summit Mount Everest in May 2006. In the meantime, he continues to climb and spread the word about the risks of uncontrolled high blood pressure.

*Ryan Bendixen is a paid spokesperson of Novartis Pharmaceuticals.*

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