

## January 2010 Newsletter



*Last January's newsletter announced Tor's birth, so he felt that an annual check-up with you all would be appropriate. He wants you to know that his first year has been generally fun, but raising parents is a lot harder than he thought it would be.*

### One patient's personal triumph:

#### The real benefits of good choices

M.V. is a 50 year old firefighter who was referred to our office because of his significant risk for heart disease and diabetes. The main concerns were his HDL cholesterol, which was low at 34 mg/dl (preferred level >45), and very high triglycerides of 961 mg/dl (preferred level <150), despite appropriate treatment with conventional medications and an excellent exercise program. His HDL and triglyceride levels suggested a very high risk of premature heart disease, diabetes, pancreatitis, and other illnesses.

M.V. made many changes in his diet. He replaced low-fat foods with 'good' fats (such as whole milk dairy products, raw almonds, and extra-virgin olive oil), took a tablespoon of fish oil daily, ate more vegetables and whole fruit, and sharply reduced his intake of 'weight loss' shakes, juices, sweets, preserved meats, breads, potatoes, and rice. Finally, he ate more meals at home and began bringing his lunch to work.

The results were stunning. After only a few months his triglycerides dropped 83%, from 961 to 165, and his HDL improved 35%, from 34 to 46! Along with enjoying a dramatically lower risk of future disease, he says he feels better and has more energy. We say – what a knock-down!

### The 'health care crisis'

#### Four things YOU can do

Current medical research is constantly reminding us of the power of good food and sensible lifestyle choices to dramatically improve health. So, while the politicians argue about a trillion dollar bureaucracy already reaching into the pockets of our grandchildren, we can individually take those steps that truly deliver better health.

A recent German study of 23,153 people over 8 years identified just four factors that:

- ▶ reduced the risk of diabetes by 93%
- ▶ heart disease by 81%
- ▶ stroke by 50%
- ▶ cancer by 36%

As they say in Germany, WOW!

The four factors were:

1. Physical activity of 3.5 hours per week (that's 30 minutes daily)
2. A diet emphasizing fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and a small amount of meat
3. A body mass index (BMI) of less than 30 (not necessarily slim, but not obese)
4. No smoking

Read those benchmarks again. These are common sense lifestyle choices simple enough to be applied by anyone, yet powerful enough to transform the very foundation of the national health care debate if we all took them seriously. It's difficult to overestimate the misery that could be avoided if the implications of that study were appreciated and applied. <sup>1</sup>

#### Research update

Miles' research work with Providence Cancer Center continues, thanks to the support of many donors. Thank you! We have completed the first study of using a food combination to reduce the discomfort associated with radiation for

<sup>1</sup> Ford, E et al. Arch Intern Med 2009;169:1355-62

patients with head and neck cancer. The results have been encouraging, and we are now designing a randomized controlled study using the same preparation for patients undergoing chest radiation, who are at risk for esophageal injury. We'll keep you posted.

## Preventing *and* Reversing Heart Disease: February 9<sup>th</sup> class

February is heart month. Dr. Hassell will be giving a *free* lecture at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm; *Which Lifestyle Choices Really Matter: Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease*. This class will focus on preventing (and possibly reversing) heart disease, as well as controlling high blood pressure and cholesterol. If you would like to attend, please call our office to pre-register at (503)291-1777.

## Good Food, Great Medicine Spring Classes

Many of you attended our recent Summer/Fall class series: *How a Greek Grandmother Would Solve the Health Care Crisis, Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease, and Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance*. We are planning a new series of free classes this coming spring. In response to the evaluation sheets you filled out, we plan to include classes on weight loss and cancer survivorship (with an emphasis on breast cancer).

The classes will be at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center on Tuesday evenings from 6 – 8 pm March 16<sup>th</sup>, April 20<sup>th</sup>, and May 18<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to register for any classes, please call our office at (503)291-1777.

## Flu season update

We have passed through the first part of the typical flu season with very few reports of flu so far in our office. Keep up the good work! Your immune systems seem to be performing well.

For prevention and treatment tips, check out our *Cold, Flu, and Sinusitis* handout on our website at [www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com)

## Is agave syrup better than sugar?

Some have asked what we think of agave syrup. Agave syrup appears to be just another form of refined carbohydrate, like corn syrup. It appears that agave syrup is manufactured from agave starch much like the production of corn syrup from corn starch. We know that corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup are not ideal sweeteners, and it is hard to see why agave syrup should be considered an improvement.

Most of the agave syrup on the market in the U.S. is manufactured in Mexico, and is processed to varying degrees and with variable quality control. More importantly, *no* agave syrup can be considered ‘natural’ or ‘raw’, and it is certainly nothing like the traditional agave extract used in Mexico for centuries.

We suggest honey (a whole food rich in antioxidants) as your primary sweetener. However, we like to remind our patients that to avoid feeding their sweet tooth (where possible) makes the most sense. (For more on the subject see pages 11 and 67 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*.)

## Cookbook is on Amazon.com!

Check it out and be the first to give a customer review! Books are also available directly on our website @ [www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com).

## Upcoming Speaking Events

**1/26/2010 – St. Pius X parish** *How a Greek Grandmother Would Solve the Health Care Crisis*: Miles Hassell, MD. 1280 SW Saltzman Road, Portland, OR 97229. 7 – 8:30 pm.

**2/9/2010 – Good Food Great Medicine Heart Health Class:** *Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease*: Miles Hassell, MD. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Portland, Oregon. Pre-registration is required. Please call (503) 291-1777 to register.

**2/17/2010 – Providence Heart and Vascular Institute:** *Cooking from the Heart, for the Heart*: Miles Hassell, MD and Providence Chef Greg Streng. For tasty heart-healthy tips and treats, attend this February Heart Month event from 6 – 8 pm at Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center, Oregon City, Oregon. Pre-registration is required. Please call (503)657-6919.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”

1 Thess. 5:21(KJV)