

January 2012 Newsletter



Dr. Angela Jones and Dr. Hassell with Mary, who refuses to let food stamps and a tough economy get in the way of her personal health revolution. Go, Mary, go!

Your New Year's Revolution!

**1/3 the risk of cancer,
1/5 the risk of diabetes, and
1/8 the risk of heart disease!^{1, 2, 3}**

If these results look attractive, read on. This kind of return is impressive in *any* economic climate, and can be yours for a relatively small investment in some inexpensive health habits. We may not be able to slow down the fast food industry or reduce the nation's sugar consumption, but we can certainly stage a revolution right here at home. Our friend Mary (in the above photo), for example, is doing just that.

The phenomenal long-term payback from adopting some simple new health habits is often overlooked, perhaps because it seems *too* simple. However, revolutions always involve hard work, and rising up against the tyranny of too much weight is no exception. We'd like to remind you of the findings from several large studies that outline five habits that promise the results shown above.

1. Exercise for 30 minutes daily
2. Get a waist
3. Eat more vegetables and less "bad" fat & sugar
4. Drink a small amount of alcohol
5. Don't smoke

Mary, a patient of Dr. Angela Jones (see photo), is part of a weight loss pilot class spearheaded by the faculty practice physicians at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center and Dr. Hassell. Mary began working in partnership with Dr. Jones and Dr. Hassell last fall to develop a weight loss strategy to get her health back on track.

Mary has lost 25 pounds since August 2011. She's not only losing weight, though; she's gaining a better future and changing her whole relationship with food. Mary's attitude is her secret weapon – she's open to new ideas and willing to try new approaches. She continues to inspire us each week as she chooses to take the stairs instead of the elevator, drinks water instead of soda, and learns to like new vegetables like eggplant. Go, Mary, go!

Mary's 4-step health revolution

1. She's exercising every day

Mary's exercise buddy is a spunky 1½ -year-old Min Pin (a Miniature Pinscher, by the way) which makes it easy to walk the recommended 30-minute minimum every day. Mary tries to walk at least a mile every day, and often manages much more than that by taking extra-long routes or joining her boyfriend if he is walking to the store. She takes the stairs instead of the elevator whenever she can – "even when someone is breathing down my neck because I'm so slow."

Stair-climbing is great exercise for anyone who spends long hours in an office building. Leaving our desk even briefly to climb a few flights of stairs is not only helping to close the distance to our goal, but it gets us out of our chairs, and sitting down for long stretches is a risk factor all by itself.

Exercise like your life depends on it. It just might! Some of us find it easier to break our exercise into modules throughout the day. Use every opportunity! If you're walking to the mailbox, try walking like you're in a hurry. If you

¹ Dam, R. et al. BMJ 2008;337:1-8

² Ford, E. et al. Arch Intern Med 2009 ;169 :1355-62

³ Reis, J. et al. Ann Intern Med 2011;155:292-9

climb the stairs, add an extra flight. The world is your gym! Jump rope, lift weights, mall-walk, cycle, swim, sail, kayak, dance, ride horses, hula hoop, hop scotch, join a gym, take tae kwon do, play ping pong – do *something* every day. An exercise buddy can make it more fun and help keep you on track. Do whatever you need to do to make this happen.

2. She's working on getting a waist

When Mary started with us, she was carrying 277 pounds on her five-foot-one frame – a BMI of almost 53. A BMI, or Body Mass Index, is a measurement calculated from height and weight. A BMI higher than 30 (some studies say 25) is considered to be high-risk, so you might say Mary was in a high-risk category.

Mary says she has always been overweight – “I never thought of any food as being bad for me” – but her weight ballooned after she graduated from high school. “I stopped caring what people thought of me and started eating potato chips.” By the time she decided to halt her free fall she was eating 2,000 calories/day of sugar (mostly in the form of sweet drinks) and getting no exercise.

Mary has worked hard to change lifelong eating habits. She carries a bottle of water with her everywhere to avoid being tempted by her former Kool-aid-and-soda habit. She's also using milk and honey in her coffee instead of sweetened and flavored creamers. She switched from potato chips to rice cakes, and then stopped eating rice cakes. She replaced regular bread with “thins”, and then was able to transition to pocket bread.

3. She's eating more vegetables

Mary says, “Now I eat my veggies first, then my meat.” She is eating asparagus, eggplant, and avocado for the first time, and discovered vegetable recipes like ratatouille (page 150 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*) which she now makes and freezes in portion-sized servings. She also found she could make her own homemade roasted potato wedges instead of buying fries. (Note: we suggest that anyone working on reducing their waistline would be wise to avoid potatoes and corn, which carry a high glycemic load and make weight loss more difficult.) Mary is eating her vegetables and fruit *whole*, not juiced – juice is calorie-rich and nutrient-poor. She is also trying to work up to her goal of nine servings each day by including some with every meal, especially the dark green leafy vegetables like kale and spinach.

4. She stopped smoking – cold turkey

Mind you, this is a woman who started smoking at 8 years old and was smoking 2 – 3 packs/day by the time she quit. “A guy I know from Bingo quit cold turkey, and I figured if he can do it, so can I!” And she did! “My taste buds have changed a lot,” Mary says. We hope that the health hazards of smoking are obvious enough to make further discussion unnecessary. If you smoke, sniff glue, or play Russian roulette, stop. If you need help to quit, your doctor can work with you to create a plan.

Need help in losing weight?

Follow Mary's example! Apply the evidence-based suggestions found in our weight reduction handout (<http://goodfoodgreatmedicine.com/resources/resources.htm>), and, like Mary, watch the weight gradually fall; one pound a week is a reasonable goal. Please note that we do *not* recommend a **low** fat diet, but rather a **good** fat diet, which includes extra-virgin olive oil and cultured dairy foods like plain yogurt and kefir.^{4, 5} **Remember this fact: when the Mediterranean diet is compared head-to-head with low fat diets, it wins in every category: weight loss, cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and blood sugar.**⁶

Remember, too, that you are not just losing weight. You are reducing your risk of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease (check out the numbers at the beginning of this newsletter again), not to mention stroke and dementia. Powerful incentives, don't you think? Mary certainly does!

Speaking Events

1/23/2012 – OHSU Nutrition Elective: Miles Hassell MD: *Nutrition in the Primary Care Setting.* Portland, Oregon. Physician audience only.

1/28/2012 – Providence Diabetes Education Open House: Miles Hassell MD. Portland, Oregon. 10am – 1pm. Call the Providence Resource Line: 503.574.6595.

3/13/2012 – Grand Rounds: Miles Hassell MD: *Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes: What are our patient's choices?* 8am, Souther Auditorium, Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Portland, Oregon.

3/15/2012 – Making Your Way Through the Supplement Jungle: Vitamins, Minerals and Herbs: Miles Hassell MD and Cindy Reuter ND, MSOM, L.Ac., RD Integrative Medicine Program, Providence Portland Medical Center, Portland, Oregon. *This talk is free.* Preregister at Providence Resource Line: 503.574.6595.

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

1 Thess. 5:21(KJV)

⁴ Warensjo, E. Am J Clin Nutr 2010;92:194-202

⁵ Mozaffarian, D. Ann intern Med 2010;153:790-9

⁶ Nordmann, A. Am J Med 2011;124:841-51