

January 2018 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell and his family about to take their brains for a vigorous work-out. They're looking forward to a snack of Hasty Tasty Hummus (recipe further on) to keep their brains well fed, too.

Improve brain function and avoid or minimize dementia and Parkinson's

When possible our goal is disease *reversal*, not just disease *management*, and nowhere is this more important than when it comes to keeping our brains in good shape. It is the brain, after all, that is responsible for calculating cost-benefit ratios like: do we eat the apple or the apple fritter? The almonds or the Almond Roca? Fast food or slow food? Those decisions have a profound impact on our short- and long-term cognitive function as well as our risk of dementia, Parkinson's disease, and depression – and cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. An important fact to grasp is that a loss of mental sharpness shouldn't be seen as inevitable as we get older. (This is discussed in more detail on page 16 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 3rd edition.)

Need help with head-to-toe wellness?

Schedule a consultation with Dr. Hassell for evaluation, diagnosis, second opinion, or treatment plan. **Sign up for a health transformation program**, an intensive doctor-patient partnership for people with specific objectives such as weight loss or diabetes reversal.

The trick is to keep our brain from losing weight while keeping ourselves from gaining weight. Happily, the same steps that reduce the loss of brain volume (comes with aging, apparently) are the ones that also reduce waist size – exercise and a whole food Mediterranean diet. One-stop shopping! Here's how to slow, and even reverse, the progression of cognitive impairment:

- **Eat a whole food Mediterranean diet:** it is strongly associated with significantly less dementia and Parkinson's disease – **and** reduced risks of cancer, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Choose vegetables, whole fruit, minimally-processed whole grains, beans, cultured unsweetened dairy foods like yogurt, kefir and cheese (but avoid low fat dairy¹), fish, chicken, red meat, eggs, and healthy fats like extra-virgin olive oil and raw nuts. (See page 20-33.)
- **Drink coffee or tea** daily. The decaffeinated forms don't appear to have a benefit. Stick with simple unenhanced coffee and tea with minimal sweetening. Avoid drinks with added caffeine like energy drinks.
- **Include one serving of alcohol** daily – and an ounce of **dark chocolate** (85% cocoa or higher), too.
- **Be active!** Exercise, especially the high-intensity kind, is marvelous for brains – and it also is an effective tool to treat depression. A good rule of thumb is to choose something that makes you short of breath and sweaty once or twice a day. Go “exergaming” with friends – like ping-pong, pickle ball, dancing, or hiking.
- **Exercise your brain;** turn off the screens, read books, do crossword puzzles, learn to play an instrument, get together with people to talk (not text!), play scrabble, cribbage, checkers. . . and so on.

Tackling the main brain risk factors

Start with a careful review of your personal health risk factors for dementia and Parkinson's (such as excess waistline, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes) with your doctor. A range of blood tests can also identify other possible markers for risk, including B12, folate, and zinc levels. Tackle the most significant dietary risk factor by minimizing sugar, sweeteners, and refined grains, including most foods made with flour. These foods are the major contributors to larger waistlines, higher blood sugar and blood pressure, and risk of cognitive impairment. There is a good reason that dementia is sometimes called “type 3 diabetes!” (Need help? Download *An Evidence-based Guide to Successful Waist Loss and Preventing or Reversing Insulin Resistance and Type 2 Diabetes* on the *resources* tab @ goodfoodgreatmedicine.com. *Fat is Good, Bagels are Bad - some (Mediterranean) principles to eat by* is another useful handout. Read the first 126 pages of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, especially the 14-step *Risk Reduction Action Plan* starting on page 69.)

¹ Hughes, K.C. et al. *Neurology* 2017;89:46-52

Exercise, caffeine, and Parkinson's disease

Exercise – particularly high-intensity – and caffeine are both known to be associated with less dementia and Parkinson's, but recent studies show they can also slow the *progression* of Parkinson's. In one study of people newly diagnosed with Parkinson's, the higher the caffeine (mostly from coffee) intake, the slower the disease progressed, dramatically reducing the need to start medications while improving the quality of life.² In another study, high-intensity exercise (defined as a heart rate 80-85% of maximum) prevented progression of Parkinson's.³ However, moderate exercise was not beneficial. This same observation of benefit from high-intensity but not moderate levels has also been seen in studies looking at dementia. So, get short of breath and sweaty, even if only briefly, every day. (See pages 50-55 for ideas.) Then sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee!

Hasty Tasty Hummus

(From *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 3rd edition, page 148.)

This is best eaten freshly made – creamy, rich, and almost warm – with slices of cucumber, bell peppers, carrots, celery, and so on. The tastiest hummus is made with home-cooked beans, preferably still warm.

(Makes about 2½ cups)

1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans, (chickpeas), drained -or- 1½ cups cooked garbanzo beans (page 198)
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
¼ cup tahini, raw or roasted
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon freshly crushed garlic
½ teaspoon salt
¼–½ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ cup boiling water

Immersion blender method:

Combine all the ingredients except water in the container that comes with the blender or a quart bowl with high sides (to avoid splatter). Blend for 30 seconds on lower speed, moving the head briskly up and down. Add boiling water and blend for about 30 seconds more at a higher speed, or until smooth and thoroughly blended. Keeps in the refrigerator for at least a week.

Food processor method:

Combine all the ingredients except water in processor. Blend 30 seconds, scrape down sides, and add water. Blend about 30 seconds more.

Note: The boiling water melds the flavors and helps fool hummus into thinking the beans are fresh-cooked.

Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part classes

This two-part class series targets weight loss, diabetes reversal, and inflammation reduction.

The classes are based on *Good Food, Great Medicine*, which each participant will receive at the first class.

Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 1):

- Review inter-relationship of excess waistline and weight, insulin resistance (common to most cases of type 2 diabetes), and common chronic diseases.
- Discuss the role of the “key four” – a whole food Mediterranean diet; minimal sweeteners, refined grains and starches; daily activity; and enough sleep.
- Work through the 14 simple steps that target your risk factors and produce effective, lasting changes to your waistline, blood sugar, and other health risks.

Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 2):

- Explore practical application of whole food choices and menu planning. See demos of foundational recipes from *Good Food, Great Medicine*. Review progress, find solutions to challenges, and fine-tune personal plans.

Time: 6 – 8 pm Wednesday
Dates: 3/7/2018 (Part 1) and 3/14/2018 (Part 2)
Location: Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
Cost: \$100 (2-class series)
Registration: Call 503.291.1777 to reserve a place

Dr. Hassell's speaking events

2/8/2018 – BASECAMP Cardiac Prevention + Wellness Lunch and Learn: *Good Food is Great Medicine* Portland, OR.

Noon – 1 pm; bring a lunch to BASECAMP and join this FREE heart month event with Dr. Hassell: welcometobasecamp.org

2/10/2018 – Food as Medicine Symposium: Preventing and Reversing Chronic Disease with Whole Foods: *How a Greek Grandmother Would Solve the Healthcare Crisis: Which Food and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter?* Portland, OR. Register at: foodasmedicineinstitute.com/2018-food-medicine-symposium

3/7/2018 and 3/14/2018 – Good Food, Great Medicine TYPE 2 DIABETES REVERSAL and SUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS 2-PART LIFESTYLE CHANGE CLASS SERIES: Portland, OR. Call our office at 503.291.1777 to register.

4/5/2018 – 4/26/2018 – Providence Heart Institute BASECAMP Cardiac Prevention + Wellness 4-part Series: *Good Food, Great Medicine:* Portland, OR. Call the Providence Resource Line at 503.574.6595 to register or find *Good Food, Great Medicine* in the class catalog at providence.org/classes

Sign up for this free monthly medical + lifestyle newsletter at Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com

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

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)

² Moccia, M. et al. *Parkinsonism Relat Disord* 2016;32:116-9

³ Schenkman, M. et al. *JAMA Neurology* 2017;doi:10.1001