Concerned about osteoporosis or cholesterol and want to avoid more drugs?

Bonnie, a 68-year-old quilter and ski instructor, was warned by her primary care doctor about the risks from her high cholesterol and osteoporosis. Because she was reluctant to start taking more medications, she grabbed her copy of *Good Food, Great Medicine* to see what she could do to improve her bone strength, lower her cholesterol, and reduce her heart disease risk. A year later, the results of her follow-up tests are exciting:

- **Bone strength**: Bonnie’s hip bone density improved *without medication*, instead of the expected worsening.
- **Cholesterol**: this improved, too, *without medication*: Bonnie’s HDL (“good”) cholesterol went up, her triglycerides and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol dropped, and her total cholesterol-to-HDL ratio improved, which is associated with a lower risk of heart disease.

**Weight**: She lost 10 pounds in the first 3 months.

We asked Bonnie how she did it: it turns out that her steps were simple, sensible, and doable for any of us:

1. **What were the main changes you made?**

   “I think the biggest change I made was to eliminate sugar from my diet. I emphatically reduced my sweet tooth. In all the text boxes and lists of dos and don’ts in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, I always seemed to be lacking in that area – couldn’t do without my sugar! Consequently I dropped 10 pounds in about 3 months. I worked to maintain that new weight by watching portions and increasing my activity level.

   I followed Dr. Hassell’s prescription for foods known to help reduce cholesterol and osteoporosis, and followed his suggestions for weight loss and preventing or reversing insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes [see pages 90–109]. I made notecards that listed all those foods specifically for my condition, created a shopping list that included those foods, and incorporated them into home-cooked meals. As a result, of course, I spent more time in the kitchen and ate out less. When I went out with family or friends, I allowed myself to eat moderately whatever they ate. Back home... clean eating ruled!

   I also printed enough pages of the *Good Food, Great Medicine* lifestyle log [see page 110] to make a small journal, and I use it to check myself for weaknesses and strengths. It has become a habit, and unless we have a super busy week, I keep it up regularly.

   One last thing that works for me: I find that if I keep my counters clear of food, I’m less likely to wander into the kitchen and eat everything in sight when I’m stressed. That means eliminating packaged snacks, cookies, etc. I made a list of all the “snack” foods recommended in *Good Food, Great Medicine* [pages 144–146] and posted it on my fridge, and whenever the desire to snack came over me I chose from that list – olives, raw nuts, pickles, hard boiled eggs, apples, pears, hummus, sharp cheese – making sure to eat protein, good fat, and fiber together. I try not to get into a rut like eating handfuls of raw nuts all day!”

2. **What were your main obstacles?**

   “The hardest part was learning what to eat in place of my bad habits. The next biggest challenge was controlling the amount of time I was spending in the kitchen. I love to cook. Every time I go out to a nice meal, I picture the kitchen and eat everything in sight when I’m stressed. That means eliminating packaged snacks, cookies, etc. I made a list of all the "snack" foods recommended in *Good Food, Great Medicine* [pages 144–146] and posted it on my fridge, and whenever the desire to snack came over me I chose from that list – olives, raw nuts, pickles, hard boiled eggs, apples, pears, hummus, sharp cheese – making sure to eat protein, good fat, and fiber together. I try not to get into a rut like eating handfuls of raw nuts all day!”
Make food (and exercise) your medicine!

Our overall health is vital, not just one aspect of it: when health concerns arise, try to deal with them in a way that both improves overall long-term health and avoids unnecessary medications. Don’t have a copy of Good Food, Great Medicine? Join the Providence Heart Institute BASECAMP Good Food, Great Medicine class series in April. Attendees will receive a copy of the new 4th edition, and the 4-part lifestyle classes will focus on strategies to reduce risk factors such as inflammation, excess weight, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar (see details further on) — as well as osteoporosis, as Bonnie demonstrated. Meanwhile, you can download handouts on Controlling Cholesterol and Calcium, Vitamin D, and Osteoporosis at our website, goodfoodgreatmedicine.com/resources.

Roasted cabbage
A simple and delicious vegetable side dish...
1 cabbage, or about 12–16 cups chopped
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
salt and freshly ground pepper
Preheat oven to 450 degrees
1. Peel away any outer distressed leaves, place cabbage on its stem end and slice in quarters, and then chop into roughly 1x ½-inch chunks.
2. Toss in a large bowl with olive oil, spread in a baking pan (or two – you don’t want a deep layer), season with salt and pepper, and roast for 20–30 minutes or until cabbage starts looking toasty, and even starting to blacken on the edges. Yum!

Good Food, Great Medicine 4-part
BASECAMP cardiac prevention + wellness class series: April 4th – 25th
BASECAMP Cardiac Prevention + Wellness Good Food, Great Medicine 4-part Series: Learn about which food and activity choices really matter if we want to prevent heart disease and stroke and improve risk factors such as excess weight, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol, high blood sugar, and inflammation. Explore the long-term head-to-toe benefits of a minimally-restrictive Mediterranean diet of whole foods and healthy fats.

- When: April 4, 11, 18, & 25 Thursdays 6:30-8:30pm
- Where: 1st floor of the Mother Joseph Plaza @ Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
- How to register: Call the Providence Resource Line at 503.574.6595 or look for Good Food, Great Medicine in the class listing: providence.org/classes

Dr. Hassell’s speaking events

3/20/2019 Providence OR Regional Quality Mgmt and Medical Staff Services annual retreat: Taking Care of Ourselves: Lifestyle Choices for Optimism and Resilience.


4/12/2019 Spring Training for Primary Care 2019: Lifestyle Medicine in Primary Care —and– Should Reversal of Type 2 Diabetes, not Treatment, be the Dominant Goal? Seattle, WA. https://cmetracker.net/PROV/Files/Brochures/6753.pdf

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)

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