

## Food and lifestyle choices against cancer

June 2019



*Dr. Hassell suggests adding your kitchen to your care plan. He's holding our NEW cancer prevention and survivorship handout; download a copy at [goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://goodfoodgreatmedicine.com).*

### Wise lifestyle choices can help us avoid cancer as well as improve cancer outcomes

There are two critically important ways our food and activity choices impact cancer outcomes. **First:** good lifestyle choices significantly reduce risk of getting cancer, reduce risk of getting a second cancer if we are a cancer survivor, and tend to make cancers occur at a later age. **Second:** for those being treated for cancer, good lifestyle choices appear to dramatically reduce side effects from cancer therapy, improve healing after surgery, reduce the risk of the cancer coming back, and greatly improve overall survival. The lifestyle choices we make after a cancer diagnosis appear to be as important as choosing our surgeons, oncologists and radiation oncologists, and appropriate chemotherapy. Better choices are associated with improved efficacy of conventional therapies, reduced side effects, and a more rapid recovery.

### Evidence-based choices: an omnivorous diet, daily exercise, waist management, and some-but-not-too-much alcohol

In a 7 year follow up study of colon cancer patients, there was a **42% lower risk of dying of any cause** associated with three lifestyle choices: **maintaining a good body weight, being physically active, and eating an omnivorous diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, and fruit.** There are likely many reasons for this striking benefit, but we know those particular lifestyle habits are associated with improved insulin sensitivity, lower inflammation, and higher blood levels of key nutrients,

and each of these is independently associated with colon cancer survival. Digging deeper in the data for this study reveals a couple of other interesting findings:

1. **Eating red meat** is associated with higher survival, perhaps reflecting the value of protein intake and maintaining muscle mass for the cancer survivor, although many micronutrients prominent in red meat may also account for the apparent benefit.
2. **Low to moderate alcohol intake** showed a trend for higher survival compared to both non-drinkers and heavy drinkers.<sup>1</sup>

### Why are whole grains so important for good health and cancer outcomes?

The role of minimally processed whole grains for cancer survivorship (as well as overall better health) is often overlooked. Whole grains are associated with less risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and infectious disease. There are many functions and elements of whole grains that make them valuable (see pages 39 – 40 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition), but of special note are the beta-glucans in barley and oats, which are the main grains in *Dr. Hassell's CrackPot Cereal* (recipe on page 214 and also included in our new cancer handout). Beta-glucans have a direct anticancer effect through stimulating the body's natural immune defenses against cancer, and a parallel enhancement of other immune defenses, such as against infection. This is particularly important when immunity is suppressed by chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery.

### How do we know how to make wise choices with so many conflicting opinions?

With experts recommending everything from high-fat, high-meat diets (ketogenic and paleo) to vegetarian and vegan diets, people are understandably confused. Here's how to untangle the issue: **First**, ask the right questions. Two important ones are: "Which food and activity choices have the **best** evidence to reduce my risk of getting cancer **and** improve my overall health?" "Which food and activity choices have the best evidence for improving my outcomes from this cancer?" Look for concrete study data (facts), not ideologies or opinions. For more help, consider reading our NEW cancer prevention and survivorship handout and reading *Good Food, Great Medicine* (4<sup>th</sup> edition), especially pages 18–21 and comparing diets (pages 32–34).

<sup>1</sup> VanBlarigan, E. et al. JAMA Oncology. 2018;4:783-90

## Succulent slow-cooked pork

This is a deliberately simple recipe using an economical cut of meat; the secret to the succulence is the combination of the long, slow cooking and the richness of the pork. We like to serve it pulled-pork style with sides of *Pico de Gallo* and *Avocado Salsa* (page 183), and *A Brisk Black Bean Thing* (page 159). It's also delicious served in hot fall-apart-tender chunks with sauerkraut and roasted potatoes and carrots.

(Serves 6 – 8)

about 4 pounds pork shoulder roast (see note)  
1 tablespoon liquid smoke\*  
1 tablespoon kosher salt

\* *Wright's liquid smoke is available in most grocery stores: make sure the ingredients are only water and natural smoke flavor*

1. Place pork shoulder in a 4- or 6-quart slow cooker. Remove string if the roast is tied. Drizzle with liquid smoke, then sprinkle salt over the meat, trying to distribute it over as much of the surface as you can reach.
2. Cover and cook on low for at least 8–10 hours (or about 5 hours on high). The meat will produce a rich broth as it cooks, and when it's done the pork will be semi-submerged in the liquid and tender enough to break into soft chunks when you poke it.
3. For the pulled pork effect, lift out the meat and roughly shred it with a couple of forks. If you don't plan to serve it right away, return the meat to the cooking liquid to keep moist.

### Note:

▪ Carlton Farms pork is naturally raised here in the Willamette Valley; it's available at Market of Choice and Bales Thriftway, among other stores. (It may also be labeled as pork butt or shoulder blade roast.) If you can't find a 4-pound shoulder, 2 small roasts work just as well. For a small roast it's best to use a small slow cooker so the meat will be surrounded with enough liquid as it cooks. If your pot is too large for the meat, add a cup of liquid, like beer or wine, or the juice (and zest) from 2 oranges.

▪ This makes wonderful leftovers that will keep in the refrigerator for a week. I like to remove the excess fat before chilling the meat by pouring the cooking liquid into a bowl and set it in the freezer for about an hour or until the fat is solid enough to be lifted off. I then return the broth to the leftover meat. The leftover meat and broth are more versatile without the excess fat – and are spectacular additions to chili, by the way.

## Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part class

The classes target weight loss, diabetes reversal, and inflammation, and are based on the new 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, which each participant will receive at the first class.

### Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 1):

- Review interrelationship 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 applications 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.

*“In 5 weeks I've lost 4 pounds and 1 inch around my waist, lowered my triglycerides and blood sugar, and raised my HDL (good) cholesterol from 31 to 44.”*

*“In 1 month I've lost 5 pounds and my doctor stopped my blood pressure drugs after my blood pressure numbers dropped.”*

*“I've lost 12 pounds (about a pound a week) towards my goal of losing 100. I love this menu and feel it is the easiest to follow. My cravings have pretty much been eliminated and it is so easy not to snack after dinner any more. I have more energy mostly because I have less body pain and joint pain and I sleep much better at night.”*

<b>Time:</b>	6 – 8 pm Wednesday
<b>Dates:</b>	7/17/2019 (Part 1) and 7/24/2019 (Part 2)
<b>Location:</b>	Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
<b>Cost:</b>	\$100 (2-class series)
<b>Registration:</b>	Call 503.291.1777 to reserve a place

## Dr. Hassell's speaking events

**7/17/2019 and 7/24/2019 – 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.

**10/3/2019 – 10/24/2019 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](http://providence.org/classes).

Sign up for this free monthly medical + lifestyle newsletter at [Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com)

*“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”*  
1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)