

September/October 2012 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell talks to Debora Knapp of KATU TV about the tasty and easy breakfast, lunch, and snack options that he brought with him to the studio to encourage busy parents responsible for nourishing the next generation.

Good breakfast + good lunch = A+

Debora Knapp of KATU TV interviewed Dr. Hassell recently on breakfast and lunch-box strategies for busy parents. Prompting the conversation was the growing crisis of obesity in children – something parents should take especially seriously because we are actually responsible for what our children eat. The responsibility is even higher when we consider that it is when we're very young that we establish eating habits and form likes and dislikes.

Dr. Hassell suggested that parents should offer their children a wide range of whole foods from the start, and avoid influencing them by their own personal dislikes. For example, Dr. Hassell has always had a rocky relationship with sardines, but it was one of the first solid foods he gave his three-year-old son, Tor – who fell in love with sardines at first bite, straight from the tin or in *Sardine Pâte* (on page 105 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*.)

Although parents need to provide good food from the start, that doesn't mean we always have to do all the food preparation ourselves – the suggestions and recipes mentioned here can be prepared by a teenager (and many of them by much younger children). Given the main factors blamed for the *tripling* of adolescent obesity in the past 20 years – poor food choices and not enough exercise – why not include cooking skills in your child's homework? It is valuable work experience with lifelong benefits – and a break from the

computer won't hurt anyone. (We will be highlighting kid-friendly recipes from *Good Food, Great Medicine* which has over 140 mostly-simple recipes that might create homework project ideas for some cunning parents.)

Think outside the cereal box

There is no reason to be limited by the traditional concepts of breakfast, but most of us probably are a bit too fragile in the morning to sit down to meat, beans, and vegetables, even if it is a fine way to start the day. **Any meal or snack should include protein, fiber, and healthy fat, which combine to stabilize blood sugar levels and slow the return of hunger.** But stick to *minimally processed* options!

A sample shopping list of real food

▪ Eggs (that you have to crack yourself):

Although among the most underrated and persecuted heroes of modern times, eggs are a perfect collaboration of protein, healthy fat, and nutrients. The versatility of eggs is almost infinite – fried, scrambled, poached, or in frittatas (pages 74 and 210), omelets, in whole grain pancakes (page 74), smoothies (page 80), or custards (page 116). Or boiled eggs, ready to be peeled and eaten with salt and pepper or deviled (page 106), chopped and made into egg salad (page 105), or sliced on bread with cheese and tomato for grilling. (For more on eggs, see our newsletter from July 2011.)

▪ Intact or minimally-processed whole grains like oat groats, un-pearled barley, millet, quinoa, brown rice, steel cut oats, Scottish oats, and old-fashioned rolled oats:

Intact whole grains are the best choice (as in the overnight hot cereal on page 76), and second best are grains that have been chopped, rolled, cracked, or crushed, but NOT manufactured into a product where the original grain is unrecognizable.

Refined whole grains – so-called whole grain breakfast cereals, chips, snacks, crackers, and bread – **do not have the health benefits of intact or minimally processed grains**, even though a label can still legally claim the term “whole grain”.

Muesli and *Granola* (page 77) are true whole grain breakfast cereals that a child could make

from a few basic home supplies – rolled oats, nuts, seeds, and dried fruit. Bread should have 100% whole grain flour as the only flour on the ingredient list. An example of honest bread is *Great Harvest's* whole wheat bread with five ingredients – 100% whole wheat flour, water, yeast, salt, and honey. Or try the recipe for *Little Whole Wheat and Honey Loaf* (page 220).

▪ **Yogurt and kefir (plain and unsweetened):** Minimally processed yogurt and kefir means plain unsweetened, preferably made from whole milk. We suggest whole milk products rather than fat-free – full-fat products help stabilize blood sugar, need less added sweetening, satisfy the appetite better, and may have *less* association with obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.^{1,2} Read labels carefully – even innocent flavors like vanilla may be sweetened. Flavor them yourself with berries and honey. A cup of whole milk yogurt mixed with nuts and fresh fruit provides a protein + fiber + healthy fat combination with an added bonus of probiotics. (We like *Nancy's Yogurt* made here in Oregon.)

Drained yogurt is a useful base for two of our favorite dips, *Definitive Dip* (page 100) and the very simple *Goop* (page 98), but the thicker Greek-style yogurt is a handy alternative to drained yogurt.

▪ **Whole milk, real butter, and aged cheese:** Don't be afraid of dairy fat!^{1,2} If you are allergic to dairy, yogurt or kefir can often be tolerated. We recommend using mainly aged cheeses like sharp cheddar and Parmesan, which children are less likely to overeat than mild cheeses like string cheese and Monterey jack. **Milk substitutes** need a close look. Milk from plant sources, like soy beans, almonds, or hemp seeds, is generally highly-refined and often has added sweeteners and oil.

▪ **Raw nuts, seeds, and nut butter you grind yourself:** Raw nuts are the perfect snack, rich in protein, good fat, and fiber. Almonds travel well, and you can get snack-sized bags at Trader Joe's. For another simple snack, spread nut butter between slices of apple or celery sticks. Roasted nuts are sub-optimal – their good fat is damaged by processing, plus they're too easy to overeat.

▪ **Fresh whole fruit:** Fruit should be whole, never juiced! Sweet drinks – including 100% pure fruit juice – are the strongest contributors to the stunning surge of childhood (and adult!) type 2 diabetes and obesity. No contest. However, the juice locked inside a piece of whole fruit is

perfectly designed, packaged, and ready to eat. Convenient lunchbox options are apples, oranges, bananas, and grapes, available virtually all year.

▪ **Vegetables:** Some easily-prepared and good-raw-or-cooked examples are carrots, celery, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, bell peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, and avocados.

▪ **Beans:** Whether canned or home-cooked, beans are high in fiber and protein, and easy to transform into a snack or meal. For example, *Brisk Black Bean Thing* (page 101), *Hasty, Tasty Hummus, Roasted Chickpeas* (page 102), *Black Bean, Corn, and Jicama Salad* (page 164), and *Quick Little Black Bean Chili* (page 167).

▪ **Canned tuna or salmon:** Tuna is rich in protein and good fat, and can be made into *Tuna Salad* (page 104), or the very simple *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* (page 190) – and some brands are ready to eat right out of the rip-top can. *Salmon (or Tuna) Cakes* (page 192) are great lunch-box options, too.

▪ **Meat – fresh!** Fresh means meat that you cook yourself, *not* pre-cooked or preserved. Ham, lunch meats, bacon, hot dogs, and most sausages are not fresh meat. Leftover *Roasted Chicken Thighs* (page 199) or sandwiches from last night's *Meat Loaf* (page 208) were made for the lunchbox.

The bottom line

Toss the junk! Go forth and shop! Don't fret if your child has health-challenged eating habits – just fill your kitchen with good food, grab a copy of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, and find a recipe!

Speaking Events

9/20/2012 – Making Your Way Through the Supplement Jungle: The Supplement (and Food) Choices That Really Matter: Miles Hassell MD and Cindy Reuter ND, MSOM, L.Ac., RD, Integrative Medicine Program, Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. This talk is free. Preregister at: 503.574.6595.

10/1/2012 – Sweet Servants Talk: Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes: Miles Hassell MD, Foothills Community Church, Molalla, Oregon. This talk is free. For more info: sweetservants@foothillsonline.com

10/6/2012 – Oregon Society of Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Rehabilitation (OSCVPR) 18th Annual Mtg: Miles Hassell MD: Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. Conf. attendees only. <http://www.oscvpr.org/>

10/19/2012 – Have a Seat at My Table: Miles Hassell MD and Paul Shapiro: *Optimal Health*: Prov. St. Vincent Med. Ctr., 11:30am-12:30pm, Souther Auditorium.

¹ Warensjo, E. et al. Am J Clin Nutr 2010; 92:194-202

² Mozaffarian D. et al. Ann Intern Med 2010;153:790-9

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

¹ Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)