

September 2016 Newsletter



Did you know that pets, particularly dogs, are associated with lower blood pressure in their owners?¹ The benefit is even more significant if we let dogs take us for walks every day. High blood pressure is also closely related to type 2 diabetes, so it is clear that dogs have a heavy responsibility. Pictured here is Dr. Hassell's son Tor with his pup Trixie, who appears to be taking her anti-hypertensive role very seriously.

Got type 2 diabetes? Reverse it!

Most of us know that type 2 diabetes can cause heart disease, stroke, hypertension, kidney failure, blindness, neuropathy, and other complications – but how many of us realize that diabetes drugs do little to prevent these consequences? Instead of focusing on just *treating* type 2 diabetes, let's put the same effort into *reversing* it using simple lifestyle medicine.

Reversal applies to pre-diabetes, too

Whether you have type 2 diabetes or “pre-diabetes,” the potential risks are the same. For example, the combination of type 2 diabetes and other common risk factors is associated with a risk of heart attack and stroke **8-10 times greater** than normal!² Most people are under the impression that taking medications to control their blood sugar will reduce that risk, but the evidence from randomized controlled trials suggests little or no benefit for risk reduction. Some of the biggest studies even show a **greater** risk of death in people taking medications to achieve better glucose control than those with less careful control.^{3,4} There continues to be hope that some of the newer medications will be better.^{5,6}

So, while the health community continues to work on better drugs to *treat* type 2 diabetes, someone with type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes can take steps now to *reverse* the disease and prevent the associated complications. As an added benefit, these steps will also lower risks for diseases like cancer and dementia **and** avoid the side effects (and cost) of the medications.

Shifting a diabetes diagnosis into reverse

First, we need to remember that type 2 diabetes is *not* just a blood sugar management problem, and *is* reversible in most cases. The next step is to recognize that a diagnosis of diabetes is a courtesy wake-up call from our metabolic system. It can be tempting to push the snooze button, but the first alarm is the best time to begin your reversal strategy, which is to attack diabetes on three fronts: adopt a whole food Mediterranean-style diet, reduce “visceral fat” (the fat in and around abdominal organs), and exercise daily. The final step is to tweak the plan as needed until we see numbers moving in the right direction; for example, cutting back on concentrated starches like potatoes and brown rice until your blood sugar is normal without medications – ex-diabetic status! This is not as easy as taking medications but the rewards are infinitely greater – a dramatically reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, dementia and even osteoarthritis, and a much better chance of a good quality of life in our later years.

Type 2 diabetes reversal & prevention plan

Here are five diabetes reversal tools to get you started:

1. If you're short on time, start with a handout on our website (goodfoodgreatmedicine.com) called *An Evidence-based Guide to Successful Waist Loss and Preventing or Reversing Insulin Resistance and Type 2 Diabetes*. (Click on the resources tab.)
2. Read the first 126 pages of *Good Food, Great Medicine* (3rd edition), especially the 14-step *Risk Reduction Action Plan* beginning on page 69.
3. Register for the October *Good Food, Great Medicine* class series. (See next page for details.)
4. Schedule an individual consultation with Dr. Hassell to address solutions for your particular situation.
5. Sign up for a one-year health transformation program, a 12-month intensive doctor-patient partnership customized to your specific situation.

¹ Levine, G. et al. *Circulation* 2013;127:2353-63 (AHA Scientific Statement)

² Ridker, P.M. et al. *Circulation* 2003;107:391-7

³ Palmer, S.C. et al. *JAMA* 2016;316:313-24

⁴ Rodriguez-Gutierrez, R. and Montori, V.M. *Circ Cardiovasc Qual Outcomes* 2016 Aug 23. pii: CIRCOUTCOMES.116.002901

⁵ Marso, S.P. et al. *NEJM* 2016;375:311-22

⁶ Zinman, B. et al. *NEJM* 2015;373:2117-28

Mediterranean Chopped Salad

This *Good Food, Great Medicine* salad was featured earlier this month at a luncheon provided by the Providence Foundation and the Heart and Vascular Institute for Providence St. Vincent Medical Center volunteers. A salad like this can be made on a weekend and served all week – packed for office and school lunches and as a side dish at home. It is content to wait at room temperature for a few hours, and with the additional protein provided by the chickpeas and cheese you have a stand-alone meal that is refreshing and satisfying.



(Makes 7 – 8 cups)

- 1 cup sweet onion in ¼-inch dice
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar or fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon freshly crushed garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

- 1 cucumber peeled and quartered lengthwise
- 3 Roma tomatoes in ¼-inch dice, about 2 cups
- 1 sweet yellow bell pepper in ¼-inch dice
- ½ cup chopped cilantro or parsley

- 1 cup crumbled or diced feta cheese (*not* low fat!)
- 1 can (15 ounces) chick peas, drained

1. Combine diced onion, vinegar or lemon juice, extra-virgin olive oil, garlic, salt, and pepper in a medium mixing bowl.
2. Seed cucumber if seeds are large, and cut into ¼-inch dice. (You don't need to peel or seed English cucumbers.) Dice tomatoes and bell pepper; there should be about 2 cups each of cucumber and tomato, and about 1½ cups of diced pepper.)
3. Add vegetables, cilantro or parsley, feta, and chickpeas to onion and dressing mixture. Toss to blend thoroughly.

Note:

▶ Any variation on the theme here works – a bit of crisp radishes, celery, green onions, olives . . . rules in the Mediterranean regions tend to be relaxed. For this salad, though, keep everything in roughly ¼-inch dice.

▶ I use Roma tomatoes because they tend to have more meat and less juice. The salad is especially good when tomatoes are in season, but the combination of ingredients is so rich in flavor it is delicious year round.

Good Food, Great Medicine classes

Our two-part class series targets weight loss, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes, and details steps for preventing or reversing them. The classes are based on the 3rd edition of *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 change in 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 demonstrations of a couple of foundational recipes from *Good Food, Great Medicine*. Review progress, find solutions to challenges, and fine-tune personal action plans.

“I’ve bounced around for decades trying to find an eating style that is sustainable. I’m very susceptible to simple carbs and will spiral into heroin-strength addiction. I want to function without being hungry [and] adherence to the Mediterranean diet works best... your approach is common sense AND evidence-based! Bravo!” Joan B, MD/MSPH

Time:	6 – 8 pm Wednesday
Dates:	10/19/16 (Part 1) and 10/26/16 (Part 2)
Location:	Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
Cost:	\$100 (2-class series)
Registration:	Call 503.291.1777 to reserve a spot

Dr. Hassell’s speaking events

9/13/2016 – Providence St. Vincent Medical Center Grand Rounds:
Ischemic Heart Disease: Which Diet and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter? Portland, OR.

9/15/2016 – Pacific University Physician Assistant Program:
Ischemic Heart Disease: Which Diet and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter? Hillsboro, OR.

9/30/2016 – Great Western Council of Optometry:
Transformational Collaboration in Chronic Care Delivery Panel Discussion. Portland, OR.

10/19/2016 and 10/26/2016 – Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part Lifestyle Change Class Series: Portland, OR. For registration information call our office at 503.291.1777.

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)