

## October 2009 Newsletter



*Tor is only 10 months old and has only 8 teeth, but he can hardly wait to use them.*

### So what's in *your* lunch box?

It's flu season! Although we can't predict the severity of the seasonal or H1N1 flu viruses, we can take steps to improve our odds of staying healthy. With a sensible food strategy, we can toughen up our immune system enough to wrestle flu and win.

First, start the day with a piece of fresh fruit (*not juice!*) and a substantial breakfast, like eggs and toast or hot whole-grain cereal with honey and cream. For lunch, make sure to eat a combination of *good* fat and protein (like raw nuts, avocado, full-fat cheese, hummus, tuna salad, egg salad) with some fresh vegetables (baby carrots, florets of broccoli, cucumber slices, or chunks of bell pepper with a tasty dip, or celery sticks filled with hummus or peanut butter). A whole fruit and yogurt smoothie with a handful of raw nuts is another good choice for a meal-on-the-run. For dessert? Fruit. Serious-minded flu fighters don't eat desserts. Well, hardly ever.

And on the subject of flu-fighting foods, remember that our book *Good Food, Great Medicine* makes a handy Christmas gift. (Maybe you know someone who could use help in the lunchbox department – the book will give them a nudge in the direction of good food habits.)

### Free diabetes class October 20<sup>th</sup>

This is the last of the summer/fall class series. Miles will be talking about *Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance* at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center from 6 – 8 pm. He will be discussing the best choices to make for anyone who has diabetes – as well as anyone who wants to avoid diabetes. Please call our office at 503-291-1777 to register.

### H1N1 flu update

Our September newsletter discussed prevention and management of the swine flu: if you would like a copy of the newsletter (or our *Cold, Flu, and Sinusitis* handout), feel free to drop by the office or read them on our website at [www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com)

### Should I be immunized?

The question we are frequently asked is “Should I get the H1N1 flu immunizations?” The most accurate answer is that probably nobody knows for sure. Here are some relevant facts to consider:

- The experience of countries like Australia and New Zealand is probably our best guide to the behavior of this flu. Their flu season just finished, and even though they had no H1N1 vaccines available, it appears they have had about half (or less) as many flu-related deaths as they normally would. This would seem to indicate that the H1N1 flu appears to be a milder disease than the typical seasonal flu, and hopefully that will be the case here in the Northern Hemisphere.<sup>1</sup>
- The H1N1 vaccine that is currently becoming available has been fast-tracked, and little is known about its long-term safety and true efficacy. At this point, any statements made – pro or con – about the long-term value of the new vaccine are going to be largely conjecture.

<sup>1</sup> BMJ 2009;339:b3317

Whether or not you are going to get both the seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines, don't neglect your immune system. Eat wisely (like plenty of vegetables, fruit, beans, and whole grains) and get adequate exercise and sleep, so that even if you get the flu, it has a good chance of being a mild case. For updates, check the following sites:

[www.uptodate.com/patients](http://www.uptodate.com/patients)

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)

## Research update

We have finished the first study in which we assessed the effectiveness of a mixture of yogurt, glutamine and honey to reduce painful mouth injury (mucositis) caused by radiation for cancer. The initial results from our pilot study are very promising, with only 10% of severe (grade 3 or 4) mucositis being observed while taking our food mixture, compared to the 80–100% typically observed. We are planning (and seeking funding for) the next phase of this research, which will study the potential of this mixture to reduce painful damage to the esophagus in patients being treated for lung cancer. Many thanks to our colleagues in Providence Radiation Oncology, particularly Steve Seung, MD, for help in this research effort.

## Miles' thoughts on health reform

### Don't sacrifice choice for change!

Like most of you, I think health care reform is important. However, there are many critical issues that I don't see being adequately addressed in the current discussion. Choice, for example: the current plans continue to be employer-based, which limits individual choice and increases the power of insurance companies. We should be free to buy insurance through a variety of avenues, including ad hoc buying groups like churches or neighborhood associations, and across state lines, without having it cost any more than employer-provided insurance.

Any legislation should be actually read, line by line, by those voting on it . . . *before* they vote on it. And our elected representatives should be under the same health care rules (e.g. Medicare) as non-federal employees. If you are interested in reading some good discussions on choice and health care reform, I recommend a couple of sites: the *CATO Institute* [www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org), or the *National Center for Policy Analysis* [www.ncpa.org](http://www.ncpa.org).

A useful book to consider is *Healthy Competition: What's Holding Back Health Care and How to Free It* by Michael F. Cannon and Michael D. Tanner. For those of you who want something briefer, the op-ed piece *The Whole Foods Alternative to ObamaCare* in the Wall Street Journal [online.wsj.com](http://online.wsj.com) by John Mackey (CEO of Whole Foods Market) offers a reasoned approach.

Regardless of what happens with health care reform, remember that our choices about daily exercise, good food, and sleep will have more impact on our health than any legislation.

## Good Food, Great Medicine

The third printing of the second edition of *Good Food, Great Medicine* is about to arrive, so our supply of books will be ready for Christmas. If you are looking to save money, gather a few of your closest friends and form a buying group to purchase cookbooks in bulk. Buying by the case (14 books total) will bring the price of each book down 40% to \$18.

## Upcoming Speaking Events

**10/6/2009 – NEXT Steps Against Breast Cancer:** Miles Hassell, MD and Ken Weizer, ND: *Nutrition and Exercise Today to Reduce Risk and Improve Survival*. For more information call (503) 574-6595.

**10/9/2009 – St. Charles Medical Center, Grand Rounds:** Miles Hassell, MD: *Eat and Move for Good Health: What Choices Really Matter?* Bend, Oregon.

**10/17/2009 – Beaverton Foursquare Church – Healthy Lifestyle Seminar:** Miles Hassell, MD: Beaverton, Oregon.

**10/21/2009 – Providence Portland Medical Center, Internal Medicine Grand Rounds:** Miles Hassell, MD: *Ischemic Heart Disease: non-pharmacologic approaches*. Portland, Oregon.

**10/29/2009 – NW Cardiovascular Management Association:** Miles Hassell, MD: Portland, Oregon.

**11/4-6/2009 – Riding the Wave of Primary Care:** Miles Hassell, MD: Maui, Hawaii.

**11/11/2009 – University Club:** Miles Hassell, MD: Portland, Oregon.

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

*1 Thess. 5:21*