

## October 2010 Newsletter



Miles Hassell, MD and Pam, one of our nurses, volunteering at Compassion Beaverton, a free health clinic organized by local Christian churches October 2nd. Read on for other ways besides volunteering to keep your brain young.

### Keep your brain fit – use it!

Age happens, to paraphrase Newton's second law of thermodynamics, but be assured that we will keep working on a cure. In the meantime, the good news is that we can do a lot more to reduce our risk of having to deal with some of the more uncomfortable aspects of aging, such as brains that stop functioning optimally.

#### Brain workout strategies

In my practice, I have learned a lot from those who refuse to surrender to the aging process. They try to stay physically active every day. They walk (sometimes with the help of trekking poles – see our September newsletter), climb stairs instead of ride the elevator, take dancing lessons, play tennis, go fishing, or paddle a kayak. Some run marathons! (Check out our newsletter from July 2009.) Their joints benefit, their prescriptions are minimized ...and it's no accident! They've made good choices.

They also keep their minds active by turning off their television, reading, getting enough sleep, learning new skills like another language or playing a musical instrument, and spend time with others who share their interests. Some stay employed, some run businesses, and some do volunteer work where they find themselves interacting with people they would normally never meet, which stretches the brain even more.

By the way, doing volunteer work or helping someone who is struggling with a more serious issue than we have can be a great antidepressant.

### Start protecting your brain today!

Good food and regular exercise will reduce your risk of having to face unpleasant events like dementia as well as heart attacks, strokes, cancer, surgery, and death. What a deal! When I talk to patients about reducing risk of death, some get confused. After all, don't we all have to die sometime? Yep, it's almost as sure as paying taxes. But we don't need to die prematurely – or live miserably, for that matter. Here are six additional evidence-based anti-dementia steps:

**Eat your vegetables:** Aim for 5 servings each day, a serving being a half-cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables, or 1 cup of leafy greens. Following a Mediterranean diet pattern lowers the risk of developing dementia by up to 40 percent, with vegetable consumption being found to be one of the most important components.<sup>1, 2</sup> Anyone who takes this evidence seriously can not only find vegetables they enjoy, but can also figure out how to make them a part of every meal. If you add 4 servings of *whole* fruit (not juice), you'll hit the nine-a-day jackpot. Whole fruit is certainly good for you, even if it does not appear to be as important as vegetables.

**Avoid refined carbohydrates:** Protect your brain by minimizing sugar and refined grains, like white rice and cold breakfast cereals. Just *one* single high-sugar meal can measurably reduce memory! Even simply reducing calorie intake improves brain function.<sup>3</sup> If you crave sweets, eat fresh whole fruit.

**Go for a walk every day:** Believe it or not, simply getting daily exercise reduces risk of dementia up to 40%. Evidence continues to support the good old 30-minute walk.

<sup>1</sup> Scarmeas Annals of Neurology 2006 59:912-921

<sup>2</sup> Sofi, F et al BMJ 2008;337:a1344

<sup>3</sup> Witte, AV et al. PNAS 2009

**Work on getting a waist:** Carrying too much weight at your waistline can double or even quadruple your risk of dementia.<sup>4</sup>

**Alcohol:** It appears that small amounts of alcohol, in the region of one drink per day (for example, 4-5 ounces of wine or 12 ounces of beer) can reduce the risk of dementia. But remember that more than small amounts of alcohol can increase risk of dementia.

**Caffeine:** The equivalent of 1 – 2 cups of coffee or tea daily is protective against memory loss.

## *Good Food, Great Medicine* classes

### **Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease (Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm)**

Follow the evidence! Join Dr. Hassell for a free seminar discussing the powerful medical evidence that supports the case for a whole food Mediterranean-diet-and-exercise-based lifestyle in the prevention and treatment of heart disease. Miles will explore ten significant lifestyle choices you can make to prevent (and possibly reverse) heart disease and control high blood pressure and cholesterol, including:

- Which foods make a difference?
- The importance of exercise
- Why your waistline is critical
- Preventing and treating type 2 diabetes
- Knowing which fats are your friends
- Getting enough sleep
- Understanding the role of supplements
- Using appropriate medication (including Niacin)

Which diet and lifestyle choices really matter? To register, call us at (503)291-1777. (For the rest of the *Good Food, Great Medicine* class series, see *Upcoming Events* on the right.)

## **The cookbook**

By the way, *Good Food, Great Medicine* is now also in the Multnomah and Hillsboro library systems.

## **A brief research update**

Dr. Hassell's esophagitis research project with the Providence Cancer Center has been approved

by the Institutional Review Board, and will move ahead as soon as funding issues are resolved.

## **Cold, flu and sinusitis**

Check out the *Cold, Flu and Sinusitis* handout on our website for tips on boosting your immune system this fall and winter.

## **Upcoming Speaking Events**

**10/2/2010 –Healthy Brain Conference:** Miles Hassell MD: *Good Food, Great Medicine*. Center 50+, City of Salem Senior Center, Salem, Oregon.

**10/8/2010 – KOIN Studio 6:** Miles Hassell MD and Mea Hassell: *Cooking for cancer demonstration*.

**10/19/2010 – Good Food Great Medicine Series:** Miles Hassell MD: *Preventing and Reversing Heart Disease*. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. To register, call 503.291.1777.

**10/21/2010 – CAPRI Heart & Lung Institute: Cardiopulmonary Disease Update:** Miles Hassell MD: *Preventing and Reversing Ischemic Heart Disease with Diet and Exercise*. Bremerton, Washington. To register, call 360.744.6760.

**11/9/2010 – Good Food Great Medicine Series:** Miles Hassell MD: *Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance*. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. To register, call 503.291.1777.

**11/13/2010 – 9th Annual Providence Thoracic Oncology Program Symposium:** Miles Hassell MD Providence Portland Medical Center.

**11/15/2010 – Family and Consumer Science Group:** Miles Hassell, MD: *Chocolate and Red Wine*. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. *Members only*.

**11/19/2010 – Pacific University, School of Physician Assistant Studies:** Miles Hassell MD: Hillsboro, Oregon.

**11/24/2010 – Providence Portland Medical Center, Internal Medicine Grand Rounds:** Miles Hassell MD: *Preventing and Reversing Type 2 Diabetes*. Portland, Oregon.

**12/14/2010 – Good Food Great Medicine Series:** Miles Hassell MD: *10 Steps for Evidence-based Weight Loss: Holiday Food Strategies*. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. To register, call 503.291.1777.

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

*1 Thess. 5:21(KJV)*

<sup>4</sup> Neurology 2008;71:1057