

October 2014 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell high-fiving an audience member at Powell's Books who used *Good Food, Great Medicine* to change his health.

Don't squash your immune system!

Give it a boost instead. Feed it well, take it for a walk every day, and tuck it into bed at night for a good sleep. Now that autumn is here and winter squash has arrived, it would be a good idea to stock up on recipes – this rich orange and gold-colored vegetable is bursting with beta-carotene, vitamin C, potassium, and manganese, just to name a few flu fighters. A daily dose of squash is a good start, but we've also dusted off the list of some other strategies worth remembering:

Immune defense strategies

Don't fret over minor episodes of cold and flu – apparently a runny nose now and then is akin to the immune system having a workout at the gym.

- Wash your hands often and cover your mouth with a tissue (or your sleeve, if necessary) when you cough or sneeze.
- Go for a 30 minute walk outside every day; exercise is a broad immune system booster.
- Get 7–9 hours sleep each day – it is an essential nutrient our bodies can't store.
- Eat a whole food Mediterranean-style diet and try to include vegetables and whole fruit with every meal and snack. (Yet another study has surfaced to support this advice: *The Immune Protective Effect of the Mediterranean Diet against Chronic Low-Grade Inflammatory*

Diseases.¹) This approach is discussed in detail in *Good Food, Great Medicine*.

- Eat whole foods with probiotics ("good bugs"). This includes plain yogurt and kefir flavored to taste with fresh fruit and raw honey, **salt cured** sauerkraut such as *Bubbies*, and fresh kimchi. It is also probable that most whole foods prepared at home are sources of probiotics.
- Eat high-quality protein: oil-rich fish (like salmon, tuna, and sardines) and red meat (as a source of iron, zinc, and B12) a couple of times a week.
- Avoid sugars and *refined* grains (white rice, white flour, ready-to-eat breakfast cereal, etc.) like, ahem, the plague. But keep in mind that eating *whole* grains are associated with *less* infectious disease and lower total death rates.^{2,3}
- There are a few nutritional supplements that might help, and we discuss some of these in our *Cold, Flu and Sinusitis* handout on our website (under the *resources* tab). A useful supplement is cod liver oil (about 1 tablespoon a day) as a source of omega 3 fats, vitamin D, and vitamin A.

Cucurbits, fall's friendly flu fighters

Got squash? If not, send someone over with a wheelbarrow and we'll give you a chunk of ours. A local gardener just dropped off a 16-pound Galeux d'Eysines squash. Ça alors! (Translation: *Wow! That's a bunch of beta carotene!*) Google explained that it is a particularly tasty heirloom variety, but I have a confession: for me, "squash" means "butternut." It is available year round, has fine-grained all-purpose flesh, and is the easiest squash variety to prepare with its smooth curves, thin skin that peels easily, and seeds sensibly arranged at one end. Even its name is delicious. Like all winter squash it will wait patiently for months in a cool, dry place until you're ready to whip up an easy side dish like *Butternut Purée*, or a dessert like *Butternut Spice Custard*, or a soup like *Smooth Butternut Bisque* on page 184. And as a bonus, roast the seeds for a crunchy snack like *Roasted Squash Seeds* (page 174).

¹ Casas, R. et al. *Endocr Metab Immune Disord Drug Targets* 2014 Sep 22.

² Park, Y. et al. *Arch Intern Med* 2011;171:1061-8

³ Li, S. et al. *BMJ* 2014;348:g2659

Butternut Squash Purée

This is fun to serve to people who don't trust squash under any circumstances. I have witnessed some touching scenes of reconciliation. The preparation is simple and each ingredient important.

(Serves about 4 – 6)

1 butternut squash (about 2½ pounds)

2 tablespoons butter

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Peel butternut squash with vegetable peeler and trim each end. Separate neck from bulb end. Cut both in half vertically, and scrape out seeds in bulb end. *(Save seeds for roasting.)* Chop squash into roughly even-sized 1-inch chunks.
2. Place squash chunks in a steamer basket over an inch of water in a 4-quart saucepan, and steam for 30–40 minutes or until tender. Reserve ½ cup of the steaming water in case you need a bit to loosen up the purée in the next step.
3. Purée in a food processor or in a bowl with an electric mixer, with butter, salt, and pepper. I use a food processor and purée the squash in 2 batches, with the butter, salt and pepper divided between the batches. Squash texture can vary; if purée seems too thick, cautiously add a few tablespoons of the reserved water. (Be careful, though – you don't want it too thin.) A delicious accompaniment to meatloaf or roast chicken.

Butternut Spice Custard

Leftover *Butternut Squash Purée* can be turned into a custard or pie filling. It's a comforting treat on a Sunday afternoon, especially a rainy one. You can also bake the custard in individual custard cups and top with whipped cream for dessert.

(Serves about 6)

4–6 eggs

⅓ cup honey

½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons cinnamon

½ teaspoon nutmeg

½ teaspoon garam masala

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

1 cup half-and-half or whole milk

1½–2 cups *Butternut Squash Purée*

-or- canned pumpkin purée

1–2 tablespoons butter (for baking dish)

Preheat oven to 300 degrees and set rack in middle of oven. Melt butter in a shallow 1½–2 quart baking dish and spread it around.

1. Beat eggs, honey, salt, and spices in an 8-cup Pyrex jug. Add remaining ingredients and beat until mixture is smooth. (An immersion blender works well.) If purée is unsalted, add ¼ teaspoon more salt.)
2. Pour into buttered baking dish and bake for 50–60 minutes or until barely set in the center. (Just jiggle the dish to test.)

Good Food, Great Medicine, 3rd edition

Books are now available at [Powell's Books](#), [Amazon](#), [Annie Bloom's Books](#), [Multnomah-Clackamas-Washington-Clark County Libraries](#), [Providence Integrative Medicine Program](#), as well as our office and website, [goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](#). Here you will find more book details and helpful resources such as a shopping list, sample recipes, table of contents, and other patient handouts. There is also a book order form for ordering individual books – or by the case for the wholesale price of \$18 each (plus shipping). Fills out a Christmas list nicely.

The practice

If you are looking for a more personal approach to lifestyle change, feel free to call our office to schedule a consultation. In addition to his primary care practice, Dr. Hassell also offers consultation appointments for diagnosis, second opinion, or to develop patient-centered solutions using evidence-based conventional and lifestyle interventions.

Dr. Hassell's speaking events

10/3/2014 – Powell's Books: *Good Food is Great Medicine: Which Diet and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter*; Beaverton, OR.
For event information: [powells.com/calendar](#)

10/10/2014 – Beaverton MOPS: *Meal Planning for Kids and with Kids*; Beaverton, OR. [beavertonmops.com](#)

10/20/2014 and 11/13/2014 – Providence Home Health and Hospice Conference: *Taking Care of Ourselves: Lifestyle Choices for Optimism and Resilience*; Oregon City, OR.

10/29/2014-11/2/2014 – Riding the Waves of Primary Care – Topics in the Tropics: *Nutritional Supplements: An Overview of Key Issues; Depression and Anxiety: What Non-pharmacological Options Are Reasonable to Include in a Treatment Plan; Lifestyle Cases*. Big Island, HI.

12/04/2014 – Pacific University School of Physician Assistant Studies: Endocrinology Lecture – *Reversing Insulin Resistance*. Hillsboro, OR.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)