

Join us Nov 5<sup>th</sup> for the launch of the new edition! **October 2018**



*Dr. Hassell and his son Tor enjoying the non-pharmaceutical benefits of outdoor exercise on a farewell-to-summer paddle while visiting family on Vashon Island in Washington.*

**Need a new trail guide to good health?**  
**The revised and updated 4<sup>th</sup> edition of**  
***Good Food, Great Medicine* is here!**

**Join us Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**

**Powell's Books: Cedar Hills Crossing**

**\*3415 SW Cedar Hills Blvd, Beaverton, OR\***

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## Cutting through the marijuana fog

Recently a patient was advised to use marijuana as a treatment for her glaucoma, and called our office to see if I thought it was a good idea. This raises a question we are hearing more and more often: Is marijuana a useful agent for improving our health?

For the interested observer of the human compulsion to self-medicate, the recent increase in marijuana use has been fascinating. While there may be a future role for marijuana as a medication, its potential for harm is too often ignored. This may be partly because most information is coming from those selling marijuana: unlike with alcohol and tobacco, there are no regulations yet requiring marijuana marketing materials to disclose possible risks. The lack of solid information combined with the easy availability of marijuana encourages the perception that it is safe.

## Potential health benefits and risks

### Marijuana is natural...but so is tobacco:

THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) and CBD (cannabidiol) are compounds found in marijuana: both are psychoactive, but THC is an intoxicant and CBD is not. So far, evidence for marijuana's medical benefits is surprisingly limited, and potential benefits for chemotherapy-associated nausea, musculoskeletal and neuropathic pain, seizures, and multiple sclerosis, have weak supporting evidence. The lack of data, pro or con, should make us cautious, especially in view of variables in potency and quality. Although it's often claimed that marijuana helps with insomnia, anxiety, and depression, evidence is growing that the opposite may be true, especially with long-term use. (For drug-free lifestyle prescriptions that have been shown to help these issues, see pages 23-24 and 75-76 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.) As for the glaucoma question, it appears we can be confident that marijuana is *not* helpful. Before using marijuana or its family of compounds, examine what is known about the claimed benefits for the health problem you are treating. (As with any health research, start by looking at the medical data using an online search tool like PubMed or Google Scholar.)

**Should we pull the weed?** There are several areas of concern: the greatest is brain health.

- **Brain health, including psychosis risk:**<sup>1,2</sup> Psychosis (such as schizophrenia) has been reported frequently, particularly in the young, and has the most serious long-term consequences. Other neurological risks include memory and attention deficits, adverse effects on IQ and cognitive function, educational outcomes, and reduced "satisfaction with life."
- **Heart attacks and stroke:**<sup>3</sup> This includes reduced survival in those who have a heart attack.
- **Lung disease:**<sup>4</sup> Based on the current research, there is no definitively proven "safe" way to inhale marijuana, whether smoke or vapor.
- **Depression and anxiety:**<sup>5,6,7</sup> Although marijuana is perceived to reduce symptoms in the short term, it appears to exacerbate depression over time.

<sup>1</sup> Keyhani, S. et al. *Ann Intern Med* 2018;169:282-90

<sup>2</sup> Bourque, J. et al. *JAMA Psychiatry* 2018;75:864-6

<sup>3</sup> DeFilippis, E.M. et al. *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2018;71:2540-51

<sup>4</sup> Ghasemiesfe, M. et al. *Ann Intern Med* 2018;169:106-15

<sup>5</sup> Nugent, S.M. et al. *Ann Intern Med* 2017;167:319-31

<sup>6</sup> Blanco, C. et al. *JAMA Psych* 2016;73:388-95

<sup>7</sup> Koppel, B.S. et al. *Neurology* 2014;82:1556-63

## The future of marijuana as medication

There is an enormous number of variables that may eventually be found to modify the potential negatives. Is the marijuana eaten, smoked, or topically applied? Is there a “safe” amount? Do topical preparations applied to the skin have adverse effects? What about individual pharmacologically active marijuana components such as CBD versus THC? There is a great deal still to learn. Based on current evidence, it looks like the potential benefits of marijuana are uncertain at best, and the potential risks are very real. For most health issues there will be better evidence-based alternatives that can be explored with your physician.

## Simply Roasted Salmon

(From page 237 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.)

Unlike marijuana, salmon is known to help keep our brains in good working order. You can even smoke it! This preparation is deliberately simple, but flavors like fresh lemon (especially zest applied with the olive oil), whole grain mustard, or fresh herbs are easy and compatible enhancements.

(Serves 4 – 6)

salmon fillet, about 2 pounds  
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Preheat oven to 425 degrees and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment or foil

1. Remove the pin bones from the salmon fillet. These are flimsy white bones that start at the top and run in a line to about halfway down the fillet. Find them with your fingertips (easier if you drape the fillet over an upside-down bowl), and use needle-nose pliers to get a firm grip on each one and pull it out. The bones are angled a bit towards the head: pulling them out at the same angle works best.
2. Place salmon skin side down in the pan, rub with olive oil (your hand is already fishy so you might as well use it), and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for about 12 minutes or until just cooked through. (Stick a fork in the thickest part and gently twist to see if it flakes apart.) Serve with a side of *Tartar Sauce* or *Rich Yogurt Aioli* (page 156 in the new edition) and vegetables like sautéed sturdy greens and warm potato salad (pages 194 and 188).

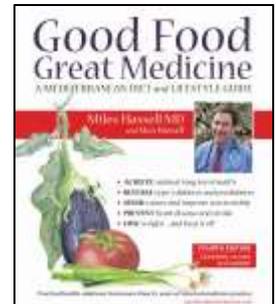
### Note:

► I remove the bones from the salmon directly on the paper it was wrapped in, and when I transfer it to the pan, I bundle up the fishy paper with the bones, seal it in a plastic bag, and throw it in the outside trash.

## October 4-part wellness series and other trail guide navigation resources

Put your personal GPS (Good Phood Strategies) to work using any or all of the following steps:

1. **Join the October *Good Food, Great Medicine* class series.** The 4-part lifestyle classes will focus on controlling risk factors such as inflammation and excess weight as well as high blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar. Each class is 2 hours, and attendees will receive a copy of the new 4<sup>th</sup> edition. (See below for registration details.)
2. **Read the first 110 pages of *Good Food, Great Medicine* (4<sup>th</sup> edition),** especially the 14-step *Risk Reduction Action Plan* beginning on page 90.
3. **Download *An Evidence-based Guide to Successful Waist Loss and Preventing or Reversing Insulin Resistance and Type 2 Diabetes* handouts on the resources tab @ [goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://goodfoodgreatmedicine.com).**
4. **Schedule a consultation** with Dr. Hassell for evaluation, diagnosis, second opinion, or treatment plan, especially for difficult or persistent problems; and to identify steps to improve outcomes, reduce side effects of therapy, and review the value of specific nutritional supplements.
5. **Sign up for a health transformation program,** a one-year or six-month doctor-patient partnership for support, accountability, and dietary counsel.



## Dr. Hassell's speaking events

**10/4/2018 – 10/25/2018 Providence Heart Institute**

**BASECAMP Cardiac Prevention + Wellness 4-part Series:**

*Good Food, Great Medicine*: Portland, OR. Call the Providence Resource Line at 503.574.6595 to register or find *Good Food, Great Medicine* in the class catalog at [providence.org/classes](http://providence.org/classes).

**10/14/2018 OR Society of Physician Assistants: Nutrition and Evidenced-Based Diet Changes that Improve Cardiac Health:** Salishan, OR. [oregonpa.org](http://oregonpa.org).

**11/5/2018 4th Edition Launch at Powell's Books – Cedar Hills Crossing:** *Good Food is Great Medicine*: Dr. Hassell will begin speaking at 7pm and book signing will follow. No need to register 3415 SW Cedar Hills Blvd, Beaverton, OR [powells.com](http://powells.com).

**11/30/2018 Providence Brain and Spine Institute's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Conference: Management of Neurologic and Neurosurgical Disorders in Daily Practice:** Brain Health and Lifestyle: Which Choices Really Matter? Portland, OR. [Providenceoregon.org/neuroscienceconference](http://Providenceoregon.org/neuroscienceconference).

Sign up for this free monthly medical + lifestyle newsletter at [Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com)

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

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)  
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