

November 2017 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell and his son Tor preparing for a cold winter, chopping and stacking wood to feed the fire. The Old Farmer's Almanac (which claims to be 80% accurate) predicts a snowy December. We'll see.

Good health, great medicine

We talk a lot about food and its effect on health, especially during this time of year, but the thoughtful and judicious use of good medicine is also important to discuss. Good medicine rests on 3 foundational pillars:

1. A careful history and physical examination
2. The best of conventional medicine's diagnostic and therapeutic tools
3. The best of evidence-based lifestyle medicine

Great medicine takes time and attitude

Digging deep takes longer but the rewards are usually worth it. The best results happen when patients are willing to fight their disease and reject short-term band-aids in favor of long-term solutions. Two years ago Mike was a fit, active, youthful, 76-year-old senior engineer with an international firm, but quit his job when unexplained and disabling heart failure left him dependent on oxygen and medications, and unable to walk 10 feet without having to rest. In Mike's case, vigorous investigation uncovered an unusual case of vitamin B1 deficiency. Today he is back to working hard on his farm – still retired, of course, but enjoying living a normal life again.

Donna's fight with diverticulitis is another exciting example of what can be achieved by fighting a seemingly hopeless diagnosis. Donna had recurrent diverticulitis but chose to work hard to develop a better immune system to see if she could avoid colon surgery. Here is a recent note she sent to our office:

"Dear Dr. Hassell and Team,

Today is the one year anniversary of my office visit and receipt of your guidance along with the gift of your wonderful cookbook. My GI system was a sad state of affairs when I first met you. I was suffering with multiple bouts of painful diverticulitis. I am happy to share that I am feeling great and have not had a recurrence at all in the last year!

Other progress:

- Immediate discontinuation of daily use of Miralax
- No use of antibiotics in a year. I filled the "as needed" emergency RX for an antibiotic and have not needed it
- I consume non-sorbate prunes daily
- I have 2 walnuts daily
- I consume plain yogurt and plain kefir daily
- I eat a multigrain-cooked oatmeal daily
- I have increased fruits, vegetable, whole grains, nuts, and seeds daily
- Alcohol is limited to red wine, once every 2 weeks or so
- I eat minimal red meat and in general smaller portions of meat
- I am exercising more frequently
- I am getting more sleep

You were right about it all...including the part about spending more time on menu planning, shopping, and label reading (*Trader Joe's* and *Winco Foods* bulk section are my friends) and food prep, but it's worth it, as my main goal was pain relief and surgery avoidance. Bravo!"

Use facts and reasoning over opinion or universal treatment guidelines

Every treatment carries a potential risk of harm by being either too much or too little, and sorting out the best treatment for any one person involves reasoning based on your health objectives. For example, in the case of something straightforward like high blood pressure, the best treatment is the one that offers the greatest chance of lowering your risk of stroke or other complications **while also** improving your health over the long term, not simply the pill that lowers blood pressure most effectively. For some, the best option is initially a prescription medicine, which can be stopped when lifestyle change takes effect.

Chili (*con Beans and con Carne*)

Chilly outside, chili inside! This recipe is from *Good Food, Great Medicine* (page 235) and can be simple or complex, fancy or plain, meaty or not, with whatever beans you like. I cook my own beans (see page 198) or use canned pinto beans. You may like it hot or tame (like this version), and may or may not choose to add a dose of bottled fire.

(Serves 4 – 6)

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium-large onions, ¼-inch dice (about 6 cups)
2 green bell peppers, diced (about 3 cups)
1–2 tablespoons freshly crushed garlic
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon oregano
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 fat tablespoon honey
1 pound ground or chopped meat (*see note*)
1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
3 cups cooked beans (15-ounce can is about 1½-cups drained beans)
Optional: ½ - 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro

1. Heat oil in 6-quart heavy pot over medium high heat and sauté onions briskly for about 8 minutes, then add peppers and cook for 5 more minutes, or until onions and peppers are tender. Stir in garlic and seasonings and cook for another few minutes.
2. Keeping heat at medium-high, push vegetables to the sides, add meat, and sauté until browned.
3. Add tomatoes and drained beans. Bring to a simmer and cook gently, uncovered, for about 30 minutes, stirring from time to time. Avoid letting the chili boil. Keep in mind that the longer you cook it, the drier it gets.
4. Add cilantro within an hour of serving to maintain color and flavor, or serve on the side. (*If made in advance, let cool completely, uncovered, before storing in refrigerator.*)

Note:

- ▶ I prefer finely chopped flatiron steak to ground meat in chili... it's worth the extra work, in my opinion.
- ▶ We like sides of *Pico de Gallo* and *Avocado Salsa* (both on page 175) with topping options like grated sharp cheddar cheese and sliced green onions, and a hot sauce on the side along with minced jalapenos.

Jump-start health with lifestyle change

1. **Schedule a consultation** with Dr. Hassell for evaluation, diagnosis, second opinion, or treatment plan, especially for difficult or persistent problems.
2. **Download *An Evidence-based Guide to Successful Waist Loss and Preventing or Reversing Insulin Resistance and Type 2 Diabetes* [handout on the resources tab @ goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](#).** *Fat is Good, Bagels are Bad - some (Mediterranean) principles to eat by* is another great resource.
3. **Read the first 126 pages of *Good Food, Great Medicine* (3rd edition),** especially the 14-step *Risk Reduction Action Plan* beginning on page 69.
4. **Sign up for a health transformation program,** an intensive doctor-patient partnership for people with specific objectives such as weight loss or reversing type 2 diabetes.

Expect extraordinary results!

Higher expectations typically lead to better results. Refuse to settle for ordinary results and work with your health care team to get outstanding results. That often requires adopting a different paradigm to achieve an outcome you didn't think was possible; it can also mean double-checking your prescriptions in case there are some you can reduce with a more vigorous and targeted application of lifestyle change. We doctors need to "de-prescribe" with the same enthusiasm with which we reach for our prescription pads. Most people don't suffer from a medication deficiency, but rather a deficiency of good food and daily exercise. They're powerful medicine!

Dr. Hassell's speaking events

11/2/2017 – Northwest Cardiovascular Management Association: *Going Beyond Guideline-Based Medicine: Which Lifestyle Choices Matter?* Portland, OR.

12/12/2017 – Providence St. Vincent Medical Center Grand Rounds: *Lifestyle Prescription for Cardiovascular Health.* Portland, OR.

12/14/2017 – Pacific University Physician Assistant Program: *Ischemic Heart Disease: Which Diet and Lifestyle Choices Really Matter?* Hillsboro, OR.

***COMING SOON in 2018* – *Good Food, Great Medicine* TYPE 2 DIABETES REVERSAL and SUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS 2-PART LIFESTYLE CHANGE CLASS SERIES:** Portland, OR. Call our office at 503.291.1777 to sign-up on the waiting list.

***COMING SOON in 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 join the waiting list or find *Good Food, Great Medicine* (waiting list) in the class catalog at providence.org/classes.

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

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)

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