

December 2010 Newsletter



Tor Hassell demonstrates sensible party preparation with a snack of sliced cucumbers and bell peppers dipped in hummus, a Mediterranean bean dip rich in good protein and fat.

A joyful Christmas to all!

*"I bring you tidings of great joy, which should be to all people."
Luke 2:10*

It has begun! The soul-stirring strains of songs like 'White Christmas' and 'Blue Christmas' are dancing in our heads, stuck to our brains like perspiring candy canes. The malls reverberate with the festive pandemonium of parents doing all the work and kids having all the fun. Here in Portland we are busy with the usual holiday stuff; stringing lights, stacking sandbags as the rivers rise, and shopping for stretchy party pants as we prepare to deal with the seasonal flooding of sugar, mostly dressed up as cookies, candy, and alcohol. Here's a list (we checked it twice) of 9 (think reindeer) strategies that might help us all:

1. Begin the day with a solid breakfast. Why? The evidence shows that people who eat a good breakfast have an easier time maintaining a healthy weight or losing excess weight. One person we know just can't face breakfast first

thing so they pack a breakfast and eat it after they get to work. Another person doesn't like any of the standard breakfasts so they eat dinner leftovers. The ideal breakfast is protein + good fat + whole fruit/vegetable. One real-life example (we polled our staff) is a whole orange (not juice) followed by a fried egg with fresh tomato on a slice of buttered 100% whole grain toast, and a mug of tea. In the quick-and-cold category is a bowl of muesli with a sliced banana. (Our recipe for muesli is on page 77 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 2nd edition.)

2. Keep good food handy on your kitchen counter or desk. Being too hungry leads to poor food choices:

- Raw seeds (like sunflower and pumpkin)
- Raw nuts (like almonds and walnuts)
- Apples and oranges, sliced for easy snacking
- Baby carrots with sharp cheddar cheese
- Celery with nut butter
- Cucumber slices with rich hummus

3. Don't skip meals. Sit down, even if only briefly, to eat something three times daily.

4. Don't leave the house hungry! Eat some good food before going shopping or to a party.

5. Sidestep liquid calories by cutting your drinks with sparkling water. Avoid sweet drinks.

6. Re-gift the junk food (you know what it is) before your resolve weakens.

7. Have a second helping of rib eye instead of dessert. Or take a bite of someone else's dessert. (Make sure it's someone you know.)

8. Get some exercise every day. Walking briskly away from the punchbowl, jogging away from the cookie tray, and running from the dessert buffet are all effective.

9. Be joyful! Don't be bullied by seasonal expectations. This should be a happy time of year but it's easy to feel overwhelmed by lists and invitations. *Stop!* Maybe it's time for a quiet dinner at home and a good night's sleep.

Vitamin D update

Many of you have seen the recent Institute of Medicine report¹ suggesting that 600 IU (International Units) of Vitamin D daily is enough for most adults, with 800 IU daily for those over 70 years old. This is in contrast to Dr. Hassell's usual recommendations of 1,000 to 2,000 IU daily. We don't think that anyone really knows how much is enough, but our guess is that the higher range is preferable unless you are getting adequate vitamin D from the preferred source, which is sunlight. Those of you living here in Portland, however . . . well, who needs sunshine when you've got cod liver oil and sardines? (If in doubt, we recommend a blood level be measured. 30 ng/ml or higher is our target vitamin D level.)

The cookbook

We've referred a couple of times to *Good Food, Great Medicine* (2nd edition) written by Dr. Hassell and his sister Mea. We should mention that it is available from Amazon, Powell's, Annie Bloom's Bookstore, and Broadway Books, as well as www.goodfoodgreatmedicine.com. We frequently get email, letters and telephone calls from people who have started eating the whole-food Mediterranean diet after reading our book, and report substantial weight loss, improved cholesterol, and diabetes reversal. *Woohoo!*

Good Food, Great Medicine

Cancer Survivorship Tuesday, February 22nd, 6-8 pm

Join Dr. Hassell for a discussion about evidence-based diet and exercise recommendations for reducing future cancer risk and achieving optimal outcomes during cancer treatment. Hear answers to these common questions:

- Does cancer 'feed on sugar?'
- Should I be on a low-fat diet?
- Should I eat meat?
- Do flax seeds have anti-cancer benefits?
- Should I be eating soy products?
- Does the Mediterranean diet help with cancer?

¹ Institute of Medicine. Dietary Intakes for Calcium and Vitamin D. 2010.

He will also talk about nutritional supplements, tips for dealing with side effects of treatment, integrating other treatment modalities like massage, acupuncture and naturopathy, and tips for evaluating claims for 'cancer cures' you may come across on the internet or elsewhere. The class will be held in Souther Auditorium at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center. To register, please call us at (503)291-1777.

KOIN Studio 6

Dr. Hassell is a guest on KOIN TV's Studio 6 on the first Monday of each month, discussing (oddly enough) health. The topic December 6th was "How to stay healthy during the holiday season." His next appearance will be on January 3rd. The program is from 4 – 5 pm.

Health care reform: be informed!

Despite the enormous impact of this legislation, people are simply not learning about it. This is a very important area, so *please* educate yourself. And if you find better sources than those listed below, let us know! We suggest you read up on both sides of the controversy. For the **pro** side: www.acponline.org/advocacy/where_we_stand/access/new_hc_law.pdf and for the **con** position we recommend: www.ncpa.org/healthreform/ or go to www.cato.org/store and download *Bad Medicine* by Michael Tanner.

Upcoming Speaking Events

12/14/2010 – Good Food Great Medicine Series: Miles Hassell MD: *Evidence-based Weight Loss*

1/20/2011 – Breast Cancer Tumor Board: Miles Hassell MD: *Breast Cancer Survivorship, and the Mediterranean Diet, including associations with Insulin Resistance.* Providence St. Vincent Medical Center.

1/24/2011 – Nutrition Elective: Miles Hassell MD: *Nutrition in the Primary Care Setting.* OHSU.

1/25/2011 – Southwest Family Physicians: Miles Hassell MD: *Insulin Resistance: It's Much, Much More Than Diabetes. And it is Reversible!* Tigard, Oregon.

2/22/2011 – Good Food Great Medicine Series: Miles Hassell MD: *Cancer Survivorship*

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2:14