

## March 2016 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell at the 2016 Komen Breast Cancer Issues conference.

### Cancer survivorship and lifestyle medicine: What really matters to reduce breast cancer recurrence and improve survival

Dr. Hassell spoke at the March 5<sup>th</sup> Komen Breast Cancer Issues conference, discussing the most important choices for breast cancer patients while dispelling some popular myths along the way. Here is a summary:

**Lifestyle choices are powerful weapons against cancer** and can make a significant difference in long-term outcomes. The degree of benefit observed with lifestyle choices is associated with not only dramatically lower cancer incidence, but also higher survival, 46% in one study.<sup>1</sup> Statistics like this remind us that lifestyle choices should be considered as important as interventions such as chemotherapy and radiation.

**Eating a Mediterranean diet continues to have the best evidence** for preventing cancer, in general – and breast cancer in particular – as well as improving cancer outcomes. An example is the *PREDIMED* study, which randomized 4,282 women to either an olive-oil-enhanced Mediterranean diet or a low fat diet. Those in the Mediterranean group were 68% less likely to develop breast cancer over 4.8 years.<sup>2</sup> The fact that omnivorous diets like the Mediterranean are not restrictive, and include a wide range of traditional foods such as fish, meat, eggs, and dairy, make them much easier to maintain for a lifetime. In addition to reducing risk factors for cancer, a whole food Mediterranean diet also improves insulin resistance.

### Target insulin resistance for breast cancer!

This is a first step in the fight against breast cancer. In fact, insulin resistance is also the underlying mechanism for most cases of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and dementia, just for a start. (See pages 61–65 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*.) Following are four strategies to reverse insulin resistance:

1. Control your waistline
2. Eat a whole food Mediterranean-style diet
3. Minimize refined sugars and starches
4. Schedule daily physical activity

**1. Waistline:** Reducing excess weight around the middle is associated with improved survival and lower cancer recurrence rates. Weight management can be more challenging for people with cancer because of medications and treatments that can cause weight gain or loss. (See *Eating well during cancer treatment* on page 18.)

**2. The whole food Mediterranean approach:** If you aren't already eating this way, start now! Eat vegetables and/or whole fruit with *every* meal & snack to get your servings up to nine daily. Include beans and intact (or minimally processed) whole grains, and unprocessed animal protein like oil-rich fish 3–4 times per week. Eat moderate amounts of other animal proteins (like eggs and poultry), and up to 1.5 pounds of red meat per week (raw weight). Eat good fats – extra-virgin olive oil, raw nuts (especially walnuts), oilseeds (such as flax, sunflower, and pumpkin seeds), and cultured dairy foods like aged cheese, yogurt, and kefir. (Buy plain and unsweetened and add your own honey and berries.)

**3. Sugars and starches:** When dealing with reduced appetite, nausea, chemo brain, and fatigue, it's too easy to turn to comforting and convenient foods with sugar and refined grains. Improve breast cancer outcomes and reduce recurrence by avoiding sugar and limiting foods made with flour. (See *Extract your sweet tooth* on page 73 and *Eliminate refined grains* on page 76.)

**4. Daily exercise:** Scheduling exercise every day improves overall survival and reduces side effects from cancer treatment as well as helping maintain lean muscle mass. It also improves hormone levels, is anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant, enhances immunity, and reduces insulin resistance. (See *Lets move more* on pages 50–55, especially *Exercise reduces cancer risk and improves outcomes* on page 52.)

<sup>1</sup> Pierce J.P. et al. *J Clin Oncol* 2007;25:2345-51

<sup>2</sup> Toledo, E. et al. *JAMA Intern Med* 2015;Sep 14:1-9

## Breast cancer controversies?

- **Dairy foods**<sup>3</sup> are associated with *less*, not more, breast cancer, but stick with cultured dairy foods.
- **Whole traditional soy foods**<sup>4</sup> seem to help prevent breast cancer, reduce the risk of recurrence, and improve survival. Avoid highly refined soy products like soy protein powders and commercial soy milk.
- **One alcoholic drink a day**<sup>5</sup> is associated with better overall survival in women with breast cancer. Keep to 1 glass of red wine (5 ounces) daily, with a meal.

(More detailed information for cancer survivors and those who want to avoid cancer can be found in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, and there is a [cancer prevention and survivorship handout](#) on our website.)



*This cancer-fighting combination is also dressed up to celebrate St. Patrick's Day; the colors of the Irish flag are cleverly displayed in the green of the cabbage, the white of the Goop, and the orange of the butternut squash. (Roasted Vegetables are on pages 169-174, Roasted Chicken Thighs on 220, and Goop on 144).*

## Got roasted cabbage?

The proportions of 2/3 vegetables and 1/3 meat modeled on the plate above illustrates one of the more practical ways to reduce insulin resistance. If you're looking for food that will stand up and fight cancer with you, you've come to the right plate – especially if you're not a cook: there are few vegetables as useful or rewarding as the humble, hardworking green cabbage. It keeps for weeks in your refrigerator without complaining, and except for the core, the whole head can be used. For the roasted version above, chop the cabbage into roughly 1-inch chunks, toss with extra-virgin olive oil, sprinkle generously with salt and freshly ground pepper, and then roast on a sheet pan at 450 degrees for 20 minutes or until the cabbage starts to look toasty and even blackened on the edges. Yum!

<sup>3</sup> Zhang, S.M. et al. Am J Epidemiol 2007;165:667-76

<sup>4</sup> Chi, F. et al. Asian Pac J Cancer Prev 2013;14:2407-12

<sup>5</sup> Zang, J. et al. J Breast Cancer 2015;18:313-22

## Good Food, Great Medicine classes

The two-part class series targets weight loss, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes, and details steps for preventing or reversing them. The classes are based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, which each participant will receive at the first class.

### Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 1):

- Review inter-relationship of excess waistline and weight, insulin resistance (common to most cases of type 2 diabetes), and common chronic diseases.
- Discuss the role of the “key three” – a whole food Mediterranean diet, daily activity, and enough sleep.
- Work through the 14 simple steps that target your risk factors and produce effective, lasting change in your waistline, blood sugar, and other health risks.

### Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 2):

- Explore practical application of whole food choices and menu planning. See demonstrations of a couple of foundational recipes from *Good Food, Great Medicine*. Review progress, find solutions to challenges, and fine-tune personal action plans.

**Time:** 6 – 8 pm Wednesday  
**Dates:** 4/6/16 (Part 1) and 4/13/16 (Part 2)  
**Location:** Providence St. Vincent Medical Center  
**Cost:** \$100 (2-class series)  
**Registration:** Call 503.291.1777 to reserve a spot

## Dr. Hassell's speaking events

**3/1/2016 – Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine:** *Friend or foe? Meat, Dairy & Alcohol.* Portland, OR <https://www.aihm.org/>

**3/5/2016 – 2016 Komen Breast Cancer Issues Conference:** *Lifestyle Choices for Breast Cancer Survivors.* Portland, OR. <http://komenoregon.org/>

**3/11/2016 – Tillamook County:** *A Lifestyle Prescription for All Ages.* Tillamook, OR. <http://tillamookcountyhealthmatters.org/>

**3/24/2016 – Providence Mercantile Health and Fitness Center:** *Lifestyle Choices for Graceful Aging.* Lake Oswego, OR. Call 503.216.6606 to register. <http://Providence.org/fitnesscenter>

**4/6/2016 and 4/13/2016 – Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part Lifestyle Change Class Series:** Portland, OR. For registration information call our office at 503.291.1777.

**4/29/2016 – Providence Benedictine Nursing Center Foundation:** *The Lifestyle Prescription for Graceful Aging.* Mt. Angel, OR. Free event, call 503.845.6841 to RSVP. <http://bit.ly/21HMos7>

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

*1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)*