

Bonnie's osteoporosis and cholesterol REVERSAL March 2019



Bonnie on the slopes with her husband at Mt Hood Meadows where they have been ski instructors for 18 years.

Concerned about osteoporosis or cholesterol and want to avoid more drugs?

Bonnie turned good food into great medicine and

- Improved her cholesterol
- Reduced her risk of heart attack and stroke
- Strengthened her bones
- Lost weight

Bonnie, a 68-year-old quilter and ski instructor, was warned by her primary care doctor about the risks from her high cholesterol and osteoporosis. Because she was reluctant to start taking more medications, she grabbed her copy of *Good Food, Great Medicine* to see what she could do to improve her bone strength, lower her cholesterol, and reduce her heart disease risk. A year later, the results of her follow-up tests are exciting:

- **Bone strength:** Bonnie's hip bone density improved without medication, instead of the expected worsening.
- **Cholesterol:** this improved, too, without medication: Bonnie's HDL ("good") cholesterol went up, her triglycerides and LDL ("bad") cholesterol dropped, and

her total cholesterol-to-HDL ratio improved, which is associated with a lower risk of heart disease.

- **Weight:** She lost 10 pounds in the first 3 months.

We asked Bonnie how she did it: it turns out that her steps were simple, sensible, and doable for any of us:

1. What were the main changes you made?

"I think the biggest change I made was to eliminate sugar from my diet. I emphatically reduced my sweet tooth. In all the text boxes and lists of dos and don'ts in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, I always seemed to be lacking in that area – couldn't do without my sugar! Consequently I dropped 10 pounds in about 3 months. I worked to maintain that new weight by watching portions and increasing my activity level.

I followed Dr. Hassell's prescription for foods known to help reduce cholesterol and osteoporosis, and followed his suggestions for weight loss and preventing or reversing insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes [see pages 90–109]. I made notecards that listed all those foods specifically for my condition, created a shopping list that included those foods, and incorporated them into home-cooked meals. As a result, of course, I spent more time in the kitchen and ate out less. When I went out with family or friends, I allowed myself to eat moderately whatever they ate. Back home...clean eating ruled!

I also printed enough pages of the *Good Food, Great Medicine* lifestyle log [see page 110] to make a small journal, and I use it to check myself for weaknesses and strengths. It has become a habit, and unless we have a super busy week, I keep it up regularly.

One last thing that works for me: I find that if I keep my counters clear of food, I'm less likely to wander into the kitchen and eat everything in sight when I'm stressed. That means eliminating packaged snacks, cookies, etc. I made a list of all the "snack" foods recommended in *Good Food, Great Medicine* [pages 144–146] and posted it on my fridge, and whenever the desire to snack came over me I chose from that list – olives, raw nuts, pickles, hard boiled eggs, apples, pears, hummus, sharp cheese – making sure to eat protein, good fat, and fiber together. I try not to get into a rut like eating handfuls of raw nuts all day!"

2. What were your main obstacles?

"The hardest part was learning what to eat in place of my bad habits. The next biggest challenge was controlling the amount of time I was spending in the kitchen. I love to cook. Every time I go out to a nice

restaurant, I think about how I could have cooked the same meal at home so much cheaper and more delicious...and it spoils the treat of going out. I worked out a routine of making soups and salads that would last for two or three days. I froze some to give me a supply of freezer meals. It worked out over time that I spent less time in the kitchen, but was still eating my own home-cooked food.

Of course, there were the usual speed bumps like not having fresh veggies in a pinch, holidays that bombarded us with yummy sweets and treats, and those times when I couldn't seem to budge from plateaus. It was a constant adjustment of shopping, cooking, planning menus, and journaling – but I was determined to make the numbers sing in that year. I set my goal and stuck with it no matter how many times I stumbled."

3. What about exercise?

"We work [as ski instructors] only in January and February usually, so it's a challenge to stay in shape through the summer and fall. I've been a regular at the Silver Sneakers classes. I set a goal of 10,000 steps a day and I aim to get my 250 steps per hour. I'm not a dedicated "hopper" [see page 27 in *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4th edition] but sometimes I hop and jog in place when I'm short on steps, and the Silver Sneakers classes have us hopping around pretty good. And I do Zumba Gold twice a week. My cousin Patty has been my best friend and mentor. It sure helps to have a friend who doesn't mind drinking bone broth instead of foofy coffee, and who will travel 45 minutes to go for a 3 mile hike with you!"

4. Is your success sustainable?

"**Yes!** Home cooked meals, fresh veggies and fruits, making my own kefir and yogurt, no fast food...all that reduces waste and waist!"

Make food (and exercise) your medicine!

Our *overall* health is vital, not just one aspect of it: when health concerns arise, try to deal with them in a way that both improves overall long-term health and avoids unnecessary medications. Don't have a copy of *Good Food, Great Medicine*? Join the Providence Heart Institute BASECAMP *Good Food, Great Medicine* class series in April. Attendees will receive a copy of the new 4th edition, and the 4-part lifestyle classes will focus on strategies to reduce risk factors such as inflammation, excess weight, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar (see details further on) – as well as osteoporosis, as Bonnie demonstrated. Meanwhile, you can download handouts on [Controlling Cholesterol](#) and [Calcium, Vitamin D, and Osteoporosis](#) at our website, goodfoodgreatmedicine.com/resources.

Roasted cabbage

A simple and delicious vegetable side dish...

1 cabbage, or about 12–16 cups chopped
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat oven to 450 degrees

1. Peel away any outer distressed leaves, place cabbage on its stem end and slice in quarters, and then chop into roughly 1x ½-inch chunks.
2. Toss in a large bowl with olive oil, spread in a baking pan (or two – you don't want a deep layer), season with salt and pepper, and roast for 20–30 minutes or until cabbage starts looking toasty, and even starting to blacken on the edges. Yum!

Good Food, Great Medicine 4-part BASECAMP cardiac prevention + wellness class series: April 4th – 25th

BASECAMP Cardiac Prevention + Wellness *Good Food, Great Medicine* 4-part Series: Learn about which food and activity choices really matter if we want to prevent heart disease and stroke and improve risk factors such as excess weight, high blood pressure, poor cholesterol, high blood sugar, and inflammation. Explore the long-term head-to-toe benefits of a minimally-restrictive Mediterranean diet of whole foods and healthy fats.

- **When:** April 4, 11, 18, & 25 Thursdays 6:30-8:30pm
- **Where:** 1st floor of the Mother Joseph Plaza @ Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
- **How to register:** Call the Providence Resource Line at 503.574.6595 or look for [Good Food, Great Medicine](#) in the class listing: providence.org/classes

Dr. Hassell's speaking events

3/20/2019 Providence OR Regional Quality Mgmt and Medical Staff Services annual retreat: *Taking Care of Ourselves: Lifestyle Choices for Optimism and Resilience.*

3/21/2019 Providence Hematology Oncology Department Brown Bag: *Cancer Prevention and Survivorship.* Portland, OR.

4/4/2019 – 4/25/2019 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.

4/12/2019 Spring Training for Primary Care 2019: *Lifestyle Medicine in Primary Care –and– Should Reversal of Type 2 Diabetes, not Treatment, be the Dominant Goal?* Seattle, WA. <https://cmetracker.net/PROV/Files/Brochures/6753.pdf>

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

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)
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