

April 2015 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell and his 6-year old son Tor (who is standing on his "kitchen observation platform") making mayonnaise using the Good Food, Great Medicine recipe on page 141. As we discuss on pages 74-75, making your own salad dressings, dips, and sauces from scratch is key to improving our health outcomes. Check out the recipes featured in Favorite Bits & Pieces starting on page 139.

Woman masters metabolic mayhem!

Michelle is a former high school English teacher and mother of 3 teenagers. She has an 18-year history of type 2 diabetes, first identified when she had gestational diabetes in 1997. Before she came to see Dr. Hassell her HbA1c (a measure of blood sugar over time) had reached a dangerous high of 12.9% (normal is 4-6%); her triglycerides were 445 (normal is less than 150) and she was on blood pressure medication. Combined with a 37.5 inch waistline and 180 pounds on a 5'4" frame, Michelle had a textbook case of metabolic syndrome.

To remind you, the metabolic syndrome is defined by the presence of three or more of the following:

1. Fasting blood sugar greater than 100 mg/dl or being treated for high blood sugar
2. Waistline greater than 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men (less for small-frames)
3. Blood pressure greater than 135/85 or being treated for high blood pressure
4. Triglycerides greater than 150mg/dl
5. HDL (good) cholesterol lower than 40 mg/dl for men and 50 mg/dl for women

Metabolic syndrome predicts 3–10 times the normal risk of heart disease and stroke *and* an increased risk of cancer, dementia, and premature death. Michelle had *all five* risk factors.

Extreme diets versus real food

After Michelle developed type 2 diabetes she was treated with a number of oral medications including Metformin and Avandia. Her blood sugar control remained poor, and in 2007 she was prescribed an ultra-restrictive diet: no sugar, grains, fruit, beef, chicken, eggs, soy, or milk products. It was difficult to follow, hard on her family, and made her feel even worse – plus her blood sugars continued to rise. She says, "I was always nauseous and exhausted."

She then saw another doctor who started her on diabetes drugs Glipizide and Farxiga. She gained more weight and her blood sugars remained poorly controlled. As her weight kept climbing, her doctor prescribed a choice of two extreme diet options – one restricting her to less than 500 calories daily and the other consisting mainly of highly-processed food substitutes.

She then saw Dr. Hassell for a consultation. "He told me I should start eating almost any whole, unprocessed food," Michelle said. She admitted that she was nervous about a radical change to an unrestricted whole food diet, "but Dr. Hassell said, 'Just do it my way for two weeks and see what happens.'"

A five-part prescription

Dr. Hassell gave Michelle a challenging food and lifestyle prescription to follow for two weeks:

1. Read the first 92 pages of *Good Food, Great Medicine* (to explain the prescription)
2. Have protein + good fat + fiber (vegetables!) with **every** meal and snack (page 77)
3. Avoid sugars, grains, corn, and potatoes
4. Do 20 minutes of exercise after each meal
5. Eat an omnivorous whole food diet, including:
 - 2-4 ounces of yogurt and kefir daily, preferably full fat, and some aged cheeses
 - 1-2 ounces of red wine at dinner
 - Red meat 3 times per week
 - Oil-rich fish 3-4 times per week
 - Extra-virgin olive oil as main kitchen oil
 - Dark leafy greens daily
 - More beans and lentils
 - Eggs and vegetables with breakfast
 - Make all sauces, dips, soups, and salad dressings from scratch
 - Watch serving sizes of everything except vegetables and whole fruit

The results are in! She's ex-diabetic!

Two weeks later Michelle had lost 5 pounds and dropped her blood sugars to 90-104 (normal is 60-100), the best she had seen in 15 years! (In fact, *the next day* she came into the office to tell us her blood sugar had already begun to drop.)

Two months later her weight is down another 7 pounds and her HbA1c has dropped to 6.4% (essentially "ex-diabetic"), indicating that her blood sugars are under excellent control. She has been able to stop her diabetes medications, her nausea is gone, her energy is back, and she says that her hour of daily exercise is getting easier and she's feeling like she needs to kick it up. In addition to feeling much better, she reports saving about \$700 per month by stopping her nutritional supplements. (The cost savings from stopping the prescription diabetes medications is also impressive: a prescription for Farxiga alone is about \$4,000/year!)

Dr. Hassell's postscript: It isn't easy to do what Michelle has done – and what she is still doing. After almost 20 years of living with diabetes and being conscious of the need to be "on a diet," switching to a mostly unrestricted repertoire of real food – healthy fats included – can feel uncomfortable. It can be especially difficult when trying to balance the needs of a family at the same time. Even though changing the way we have always done something is a challenge, moving to a whole food Mediterranean diet is made much easier by its lack of restrictions and the choice of so many good-tasting options. It is fair to say that Michelle's efforts have made her long-term health future much brighter and certainly less complicated. Congratulations, Michelle!

Work to reverse type 2 diabetes – don't be satisfied with just managing it!

Type 2 diabetes has doubled or tripled in frequency over the last thirty years, which is a sobering statistic when you consider the list of long-term health risks associated with it – cancer, heart disease, stroke, disability, depression, drug side effects, and enormous cost. Prescription medicines for type 2 diabetes come with limited benefit, significant potential for side effects, and often hair-raising expense: \$3-5,000 per drug per year is not uncommon. In fact, diabetes is estimated to generate 20% of all health care costs – there wouldn't even **be** a health care crisis without type 2 diabetes!

Michelle's story is an inspiration for us all: it demonstrates the power of good food and lifestyle choices, and illustrates the fact that not everyone

needs pharmaceutical treatment. This is not to say that we never use drugs to treat type 2 diabetes – they have their place, but there are other steps to take. The good news that needs to be hollered from the rooftops is that there are changes we can make to our food and lifestyle choices that can reverse this trend, one person at a time.

Information for life transformation: **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 new 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 14 simple risk reduction steps to target the inter-related factors and produce effective, lasting change in your waistline, blood sugar, and other risk factors.

Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 2):

- Explore practical application of whole food choices and menu planning. Review progress, find solutions to challenges, and fine-tune personal action plans.

Time:	7 – 9 pm (Tuesday)
Date:	4/28/15 (Part 1) and 5/5/15 (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

4/01/2015 and 4/08/2015 – Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part Lifestyle Change Class Series: Portland, OR. For registration information call our office at 503.291.1777.

4/21/2015 – Providence Park WellSpace: *Friend or Foe? Grains, Gluten, Meat, Dairy, Salt, Fat, and Alcohol;* Portland, OR. FREE CLASS, call the *Providence Resource Line* at 503.574.6595 to register <http://www.providencehealthplan.com/wellspace>

4/28/2015 and 5/05/2015 – Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part Lifestyle Change Class Series: Portland, OR. For registration information call our office at 503.291.1777.

4/29/2015 – Town Club: *Friend or Foe? Grains, Meat, Salt, Fat, & Alcohol;* Portland, OR. <http://www.thetownclub.org/>

*"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)*