

Improve your odds of beating cancer by 42%!

July 2019



Miles Hassell MD discussing the health benefits of intact whole grains for cancer prevention and survivorship at our June cooking class for 1-year and 6-month plan participants at [Market of Choice](#) in Beaverton, Oregon.

Let's use every weapon we have to prevent and defeat cancer

Three of the most effective anti-cancer prescriptions are available to everyone, have only positive side effects, and involve pretty simple choices:

1. Weight management: The weight we carry around our waistline is more hazardous for heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers than weight elsewhere on the body. Two key strategies explored in our weight loss classes are: (a) prepare your own food from scratch and (b) choose good fat, not low fat.

2. Fitness: Overall weight loss is not as important as being fit and losing inches around the waist. Exercise once or twice daily, whether it's 30-60 minutes of brisk walking or 5 minutes of high intensity exercise, like jumping rope or climbing stairs. Whatever activity we do (especially regularly) is better than doing nothing!

3. A good diet: The best evidence for benefit is an omnivorous non-restrictive Mediterranean model which is easy to follow and includes vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, red meat, fish, and poultry. Highly restrictive diets (such as vegan, vegetarian, paleo, and ketogenic) do not have comparable research data to support them. Anyone with a cancer diagnosis should not have to deal with unnecessary restrictions! In particular, I recommend against any diet that avoids true whole grains (see page 39 of *Good Food, Great Medicine* 4th edition), a family of foods with abundant evidence for benefit across the entire spectrum of common diseases.

For a comprehensive 10-step anti-cancer plan visit goodfoodgreatmedicine.com and see our [Cancer Prevention and Survivorship](#) handout on the [resources](#) tab. A vigorous application of these simple (and underrated) food and activity choices are associated with dramatically improved outcomes.

Are my odds *really* dramatically improved?

Yes! For example, as we mentioned in our [June 2019 newsletter](#) we featured a 2018 high quality study of people with colon cancer showing a **42% lower risk of dying prematurely of any cause** associated with prudent food and activity choices and highlighting the particular benefit of whole grains. Don't give cancer an advantage!

What does beating cancer have to do with sugars and other refined carbohydrates, waistline, pre-diabetes, and diabetes?

There is a consistent connection between cancer risk and higher insulin and other hormone levels, excess waistlines, and increased blood sugar, so it's hardly surprising that strategies to **reduce** waists, insulin levels, and blood sugar are associated with both a lower risk of getting cancer and higher rate of surviving cancer. The mechanisms by which good food and activity choices can impact cancer outcomes are poorly understood, but the effects appear to be impressive:

- Improved immunity, helping our immune system to directly attack tumors, reducing risk of infections during therapy, and lowering inflammatory loads
- Increased antioxidant levels in blood and tissues
- Lower levels of insulin and other hormones which can promote cancers

The benefits of evidence-based lifestyle medicine go beyond just beating cancer

Learning about exceptional – not just good – lifestyle choices does a lot more than help beat cancer and lower the risk of recurrence: it also appears to improve healing and recovery following surgery and **reduce side effects from other cancer therapies**. The same choices also substantially reduce the risk of premature heart disease and stroke, which take more lives of cancer survivors than the actual cancer itself. They lower cholesterol and blood pressure, prevent and reverse type 2 diabetes, and usually reduce the need for most prescription medications significantly.

The *Good Food, Great Medicine* class targeting weight loss and insulin resistance this month is a good start to an anticancer program: The July 2-part class (details further on) can help jump-start your cancer-fighting offensive. You'll have fun, too!

Barley Salad with red peppers and corn

This colorful salad (page 218, *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4th edition) showcases the remarkable and under-rated health benefits of whole grains. It's healthy, practical, and delicious – a good choice for a summer picnic: it keeps well, too, and you can enjoy leftovers for a week, straight from the refrigerator or at room temperature. Try including other intact grains like whole rye berries, farro, or kamut – or a combination.

(Serves about 6)

3 cups *cooked* barley (hull-less, not pearled) and/or rye or wheat berries, well-drained (see note)

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

-or- apple cider vinegar

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon freshly crushed garlic

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 cup ¼-inch diced sweet onion

1 red bell pepper in ¼-inch dice (1½ cups)

1½ cups celery in ¼-inch dice

1½ cup frozen corn

1 cup raw or toasted chopped nuts

Optional: ½ cup chopped parsley or cilantro

1. Combine lemon juice (or vinegar), oil, garlic, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl. Add cooked grain and diced onion. Mix thoroughly.
2. Add peppers, celery, corn, nuts, and fresh herbs, and toss to blend. Serve at any temperature.

Note: The stovetop method is the best way to cook the grains to create the right texture for a salad:

(Makes about 3 cups)

1 cup whole intact grains (whole hull-less barley and rye berries are a good combination)

2 cups water

½ teaspoon salt

1. Combine whole grains with water and salt in a small saucepan (1½-quart). Bring to a boil uncovered, and then turn off heat, cover, and leave 8 hours or overnight on the stovetop.
2. Test grains for tenderness: if grains are too firm, bring to a boil again. Remove from heat, cover, and allow to cool. Drain well, and store in refrigerator (unless making salad the same day).

Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part class

The classes target weight loss, diabetes reversal, and inflammation, and are based on the new 4th edition of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, which each participant will receive at the first class.

Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 1):

- Review interrelationship 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 four” – a whole food Mediterranean diet; minimal sweeteners, refined grains and starches; daily activity; and enough sleep.
- Work through the 14 simple steps that target your risk factors and produce effective, lasting changes to your waistline, blood sugar, and other health risks.

Good Food, Great Medicine class (part 2):

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

“In 5 weeks I’ve lost 4 pounds and 1 inch around my waist, lowered my triglycerides and blood sugar, and raised my HDL (good) cholesterol from 31 to 44.”

“In 1 month I’ve lost 5 pounds and my doctor stopped my blood pressure drugs after my blood pressure numbers dropped.”

“I’ve lost 12 pounds (about a pound a week) towards my goal of losing 100. I love this menu and feel it is the easiest to follow. My cravings have pretty much been eliminated and it is so easy not to snack after dinner any more. I have more energy mostly because I have less body pain and joint pain and I sleep much better at night.”

Time: 6 – 8 pm Wednesday
Dates: 7/17/2019 (Part 1) and 7/24/2019 (Part 2)
Location: Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
Cost: \$100 (2-class series)
Registration: Call 503.291.1777 to reserve a place

Dr. Hassell’s speaking events

7/17/2019 and 7/24/2019 – 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 register.

10/3/2019 – 10/24/2019 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.

Sign up for this free monthly medical + lifestyle newsletter at Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com

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