

## October 2015 Newsletter



Dr. Hassell and his son Tor holding a healthy new addition to the book selection at Costco in Aloha, Oregon.

### Are we being tricked by our treats?

There's nothing wrong with sugar itself – it's been making life more enjoyable for thousands of years. What *has* changed is the amount we eat, often without even realizing it. Even if we're working hard to avoid it, sugar sneaks into the most surprising places – including products specifically marketed to the health-minded. For example, the ingredient list of a popular “all natural” almond and apricot bar has some form of sugar as its third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh ingredient: *almonds, coconut, glucose syrup, honey, apricot puree concentrate, apple juice concentrate, crisp rice (rice flour, sugar, salt), glycerin, citrus fiber, soy lecithin, chicory root fiber, citrus pectin, natural flavor.* (The fruit concentrates may sound natural, but they are highly refined sweeteners only distantly related to their parent fruits.) A *true* “all natural” whole food alternative might be something like a handful of raw almonds with a couple of squares of 70% (or higher) dark chocolate and/or a sliced apple. (See pages 106-108 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Good Food, Great Medicine* for more snack suggestions.)

Poor old sugar! All it ever wanted was to make us happy, and now it's getting blamed for causing high blood pressure, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer, dementia, tooth decay, depression, inflammation, and maybe even *quadrupling*<sup>1</sup> our risk of heart disease and stroke! Let's remember that sweets are treats, and save them for special occasions. The less we eat, the less we will crave. It works!

<sup>1</sup> Yang, Q. et al. JAMA Intern Med 2014;174:516-24

### Mediterranean diet and 68% reduction in breast cancer over 4.8 years!

The latest *PREDIMED* study to showcase the remarkable benefits of a Mediterranean diet was a 4.8 year study of 4,282 women randomized to either a Mediterranean diet or a low fat diet. The primary outcome of the study showed a 40% reduction in stroke and a 30% reduction in cardiovascular disease.<sup>2</sup> It also showed that women randomized to the olive-oil-enhanced Mediterranean diet were 68% less likely to develop breast cancer over 4.8 years!<sup>3</sup> These results echo an older randomized trial of the Mediterranean diet, the *Lyon Diet Heart Study*, which showed a 60% reduction in developing cancer over four years in the Mediterranean diet group compared to those in the low fat group. Read more on diet and cancer on pages 17 and 18 in *Good Food, Great Medicine* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition).

High quality randomized studies like these remind us all that the most important steps to good health are in our daily choices. They also highlight the superior benefits of omnivorous diets like the Mediterranean model over highly restrictive diets in achieving and maintaining good health.

### Nine tricks to reduce your sweet tooth

Let's get ready for the sugary months ahead of us:

- 1. Always keep snacks with protein, good fat, and fiber handy.** This combination satisfies hunger longer and helps sidestep sugar cravings that pretend to be genuine hunger.
- 2. Save dessert for special occasions,** and then make sure it's really worth it; eat it s-l-o-w-l-y, savor each morsel, and keep the serving small.
- 3. Choose “better” sweet options;** redefine dessert to include real food like fresh fruit, real whipping cream, nuts, and 70% dark chocolate.
- 4. Identify and anticipate your weakness.** Figure out how you are going to handle potential confrontations with that evening bowl of ice cream, the candy at the office, the morning scone from a coffee shop. Then, plan ahead and make sure alternative options are at hand.

<sup>2</sup> Estruch, R. et al. NEJM 2013;368:1279-90

<sup>3</sup> Toledo, E. et al. JAMA Intern Med 2015;Sep 14:1-9

5. **Give yourself permission to throw it away.** Take two bites and then toss it. This is how it works: the first bite will always be the most exciting, the second bite will confirm it, but then the rest is routine. So, stop before it gets boring.
6. **Check for added sweeteners on ingredient lists.** You might be surprised how often one or more forms of sugar turn up in the most unexpected places – like “all natural” bars.
7. **Don’t let yourself get too hungry.** That’s when we’re the most vulnerable to being sandbagged by a strong temptation.
8. **Quench your thirst first.** You’ll be surprised by the power of a glass of cold sparkling water to diminish a craving that you think only a soft drink or a glass of wine will satisfy.
9. **JUST DON’T BUY SWEET THINGS!** This is one trick that works every time it’s tried.

### Calorie-free ain’t free

Here are five main reasons to avoid all non-nutritive sweeteners and calorie-free alternatives to sugar.<sup>4</sup>

1. Sugar substitutes maintain our sweet tooth.
2. Artificially-sweetened products like drinks, salad dressings, and desserts are usually nutritionally compromised in other ways.
3. Sugar substitutes mess with your body’s normal reactions to food, including alterations in stomach emptying time and brain and hormonal responses.
4. In many studies, sugar substitutes are as closely linked with obesity, diabetes, and heart disease as real sugar, and choosing artificially sweetened drinks might double your risk of developing diabetes.
5. Diet drinks can make you fat! This may be because they lead to eating more calories overall.

### The one-year health restoration plan

For stubborn health challenges like type 2 diabetes, excess weight, and heart disease, a personalized one-year health restoration plan may be what you need. It is a patient-doctor partnership with the goal of reversing your disease and improving your long-term quality of life. We will work with you to:

- Build your cooking confidence with fun kitchen tutorials and help with your pantry makeover
- Create an action plan with aggressive risk factor management and dietary counseling

- Coordinate with other treating physicians
- Arrange for additional tests as needed
- Develop an intensive set of solutions to target specific issues like blood pressure, blood sugar, weight, cholesterol, joint pain, and sleep
- Minimize the use of medications
- Schedule regular follow-up visits, in person or by Skype or telephone, to evaluate results and make changes as necessary

Feel free to call our office for more information.

### Information for life transformation: Next *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 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. Review progress, find solutions to challenges, and fine-tune personal action plans.

<b>Time:</b>	6 – 8 pm Wednesday
<b>Dates:</b>	10/21/15 (Part 1) and 10/28/15 (Part 2)
<b>Location:</b>	Providence St. Vincent Medical Center
<b>Cost:</b>	\$100 (2-class series)
<b>Registration:</b>	Call 503.291.1777 to reserve a spot

### Dr. Hassell’s speaking events

- 10/2/2015 – 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Pacific NW Conference: Excellence in Breast and Gynecologic Care:** *Refined Carbohydrates and Insulin Resistance for the Cancer Survivor.* [legacyhealth.org/conferences](http://legacyhealth.org/conferences) Portland, OR.
- 10/21/2015 and 10/28/2015 – Good Food, Great Medicine 2-part Lifestyle Change Class Series:** Portland, OR. For registration information call our office at 503.291.1777.

Sign up for this free monthly food and lifestyle newsletter at [Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com](http://Goodfoodgreatmedicine.com)

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

<sup>4</sup> For references, see page 45 of *Good Food, Great Medicine* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)