

December 2008 Newsletter



Holiday survival tips

We *all* know how difficult it is to be disciplined and sensible this time of year; for at least the next three weeks we will have to negotiate a relentless march of undisguised sugar and cunningly designed refined carbohydrates, much of which is made by well-meaning friends and relatives.

To make the situation worse, we can get so busy with holiday festivities that suddenly we realize that we haven't eaten anything since breakfast. Furthermore, here it is 8 PM and the healthiest thing in the room is a tray of miniature hydrogenated spinach quiches with one antioxidant apiece.

Hints for healthy holiday habits:

- **Eat well at home.** Continue to plan for three or more healthy meals daily, no matter what your social schedule. If we are well fed most of the time, we have more will power to avoid the holiday food traps. Make sure to keep plenty of the healthy basic foods at home: vegetables, fruit, beans, minimally processed whole grains, eggs, fish, and unprocessed meats.
 - **Keep tasty, healthy snacks handy.** Try keeping a list of good snacks on the refrigerator door. Then, if you're not
- thinking clearly due to a sudden acute onset of refined carbohydrate deficiency, the list can help you through the crisis by doing your thinking for you. (There are a couple of pages of suggestions in *Good Food, Great Medicine*.) Remember that fats and proteins are the most satisfying – snacks like a handful of raw nuts and raisins, sharp cheddar cheese with a crisp apple, and peanut butter or almond butter on celery.
- **Use strategy away from home.** When eating out, use a carefully thought-out plan. Remember that most parties have *some* good food...you just have to find it. Serve yourself generously with the basics: vegetables, fruits, and protein foods like beans dips and salads, cheese, and meat (unless it's processed or preserved meat, which is wise to avoid) Try to keep the sweets to just a bite or two, preferably from someone else's plate.
 - **Think before you drink.** Try to steer clear of soda pop (including diet sodas, which are just as bad for other reasons) and sweet drinks. A good strategy is to keep sparkling water chilled in your refrigerator ready to serve visitors or bring with you to parties. (Lemon lime flavor is spunky without being distractingly fruity.) Sparkling water can also help you resist a second glass of wine. Evidence shows that women should stop at one glass, and men at two.
 - **Share!** Share excess sweets and pastries that appear in your home with friends and neighbors. You'll be healthier, they'll be delighted. If you can't find anyone to share, we promise not to tell anyone if you throw them away.
 - **Stay active.** Make at least 30 minutes of daily exercise a priority, even if it means you are late to a party. In fact, if you happen to like dancing, Dr. Hahn suggests that you can do your exercising *at* the party.

New study on happiness

The sometimes-overwhelming pressures of the holiday season typically increase tensions and fatigue. According to a recent study, watching television may be one more risk factor.....

Television has long been associated with behavior problems in children – including difficulties with learning and increased tendencies to bully. With both children and adults, of course, are the TV-related problems with weight gain and diabetes. Now studies are confirming another problem associated with television; depression.

A recent research paper by John Robinson in the journal *Social Indicators Research* describes the findings from studying the daily activities of 45,000 Americans over 35 years. Of every activity they assessed, television was the one most strongly related to being unhappy: Unhappy people watched TV more, happy people watched TV less. (Many of us suspect that too much time in front of the computer screen with the internet, videos, and games would probably be guilty of the same association.)

In Dr. Robinson's study, activities found to be associated with happiness included socializing, going to church, and reading newspapers. (Dr Hahn thinks that dancing was simply overlooked by the researchers.) Many other activities have been strongly associated with better moods, including volunteering and outdoor exercise.

Groucho Marx said: "I find television very educational. When someone turns on the set, I go into another room and read a book."

Cookbook update

A pre-Christmas release is still expected for the revised edition of *Good Food, Great Medicine*. This edition will have several new recipes added from Mea's collection and a comprehensive new index. If you would like a phone call when the books arrive from the printer, just call our office and we'll be happy to put you on our list.

All of us – Miles, Angela, Mea, Lisa, Katherine, Kelly, Pam, and Sandy – wish you a peaceful Christmas and a joyful New Year of fresh beginnings, whole foods, and happy hearts!

...for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

(Luke 2:10)

Upcoming Speaking Events

12/2/2008 – Which lifestyle choices really matter? Miles Hassell, MD (Kruse Way Rotary)

12/2/2008 and 2/3/2009 – Beating Breast Cancer, the NEXT Step Miles Hassell, MD and Ken Weizer, ND: *Nutrition and Exercise Today*. Topics include: food and exercise choices that affect breast cancer risk; whole foods and the Mediterranean-style diet; why good food choices, not supplements, are your best bet for good health; and how acupuncture, massage and naturopathic medicine can reduce the side effects of cancer treatment. Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, Cancer Center. *This event is free. For reservations or more information, please call the Providence Resource Line (503) 574-6595.*

1/26/2009 – Nutrition in the Primary Care Setting Miles Hassell, MD (OHSU Lecture) Portland, Oregon. *For medical students.*

2/5/2009– Chocolate and Red Wine Miles Hassell, MD Multnomah Athletic Club, Portland, Oregon.

2/22/2009– Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of OR Mid-Winter Conference: Miles Hassell, MD: *Supplement Jungle*. Bend, Oregon.