

New Year's revolution: grab the reins!

January 2020



David Ellis MD, left, and Miles Hassell MD: Bring us your toughest medical problems! We are primary care physicians who also offer comprehensive internal medicine consultations, thorough evaluations and diagnostics, evidence-based treatment plans using both conventional and lifestyle elements, minimizing medications, and working closely with specialists.

Start a New Year's revolution!

Upset the status quo! Turn the tables! Grab the reins! There are lots of things in life outside our control, but each of us is in charge of filling our shopping cart. One of our great joys is watching people transform their health trajectories using ordinary tools like forks, spoons, and a pair of sneakers. The decisions we make concerning the food we eat and our exercise and sleep habits impact our long-term health far more than the genes inherited from our parents or the prescriptions handed to us by our physicians!

Remember Eric's health revolution?

We featured Eric's health transformation in our August 2019 newsletter, in which Eric described the changes he made as well as some of the obstacles he overcame. To recap the numbers that tell the story: a year ago he weighed 307 pounds and had too-high cholesterol and rising blood sugars. His primary care physician counseled him to get serious about his health habits and suggested that he read *Good Food, Great Medicine*. Eric cut out processed foods, began focusing on a Mediterranean-style whole food diet, and started walking every day; within 3 months he had lost 22 pounds, his fasting glucose dropped 25%, his HDL improved by 25%, and his LDL and triglycerides both dropped 20%! He then came to the 2-part *Good Food Great Medicine* weight loss and type 2 diabetes reversal class, and in the following 3 months lost *another* 34 pounds!

Eric's year-end update: Since August he has lost *another* 18 pounds – **a total of 74 pounds**, so far! He continues to improve his cholesterol: his LDL went from 131 to 85 and HDL from 48 to 73! Perhaps most importantly, he improved his total cholesterol to HDL ratio (an indicator of heart disease and stroke risk) from 4.2 to 2.3! And his recent Cardiac CT for Calcium Scoring (a scan of coronary arteries to measure buildup of plaque) showed – **ZERO!**

Could this health transformation be yours?

We can't emphasize enough that there is no way we could see this kind of improvement with any medications or treatments we have to offer; Eric carefully chose the do-it-yourself option, a path that he calculated would involve the least medication and the best evidence for success. However, it's probably safe to say that this level of success is only achieved with personal determination and hard work, and we are glad to stand on the sidelines and cheer! Ready for your own health revolution? Here are four ways to go about it:

- **Read** the first 110 pages of *Good Food, Great Medicine*
- **Attend** one or both of our upcoming seminars in March and April (details of the 2020 class series further on)
- **Schedule** a consultation to explore your own health trajectory with Dr. Hassell or Dr. Ellis
- **Enroll** in a 1-year or 6-month Health Transformation Plan, a one-on-one doctor-patient partnership providing support, accountability, encouragement, and dietary counsel, with the goal of making health improvements permanent using food, activity, and medications (where appropriate). Common targets include:
 - diabetes prevention and reversal
 - sustainable weight loss
 - cancer prevention and survivorship
 - lowering heart disease and stroke risk factors
 - reduced depression and anxiety

Another reason to keep drinking coffee...

One of the observed benefits of coffee is the significant reduction of type 2 diabetes risk. A paper in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* showed a 58% lower risk of developing diabetes in those who drank 2 or 3 cups of filtered coffee daily compared to those who drank less than one cup per day, a finding consistent with prior studies. This study also focused on the compounds in coffee that may be responsible for the benefits.¹

¹ Shi, L. et al. *J Intern Med* 2019 Dec 9 doi: 10.1111/joim.13009

Marijuana raises heart disease risk

With the popularity of marijuana use, the details of the damage it does to your health, including cognition and risk of psychiatric disease often get overlooked. A recent paper outlined the physical damage from recreational marijuana use to the structure and function of the heart.² This is something to take very seriously. (For more about marijuana and health, see our October 2018 newsletter.)

Minestrone soup

(Adapted from page 193 of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, 4th edition.) It might seem outrageous to give this simple recipe the title of minestrone – but I do. With chickpeas and a respectable amount of vegetables per square inch, a good-sized bowl of this soup qualifies as a meal.

(Serves 4 – 6)

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 medium onions in ¼-inch dice (3–4 cups)
2–3 carrots in ¼-inch dice (1½ cups)
3–4 stalks celery in ¼-inch dice (1½ cups)
1 tablespoon freshly crushed garlic
1½ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon dried oregano
Optional: ½ cup minced fresh parsley
4 cups of water or broth (see note)
4–6 cups bite-sized cauliflower pieces
3 medium zucchini, diced (about 4 cups)
1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes
2 cups cooked chickpeas, or 1 can (15 ounces)

1. Heat oil in a large pot (5-quart or larger) over medium high heat and add diced onions, carrots, and celery (they should sizzle when they hit the oil). Sauté for about 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
2. Add garlic, salt, pepper, and herbs and sauté for another minute, stirring constantly.
3. Add broth/water and bring to a simmer, and then add cauliflower and simmer 10 minutes.
4. Add zucchini, tomatoes with their juice, and drained chickpeas (no need to rinse them). Bring back to a simmer, reduce heat to low, and cook gently for another 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Serve with optional **basil purée** (see note) and freshly grated Parmesan on the side.

Note:

- I also include the liquid from my home-cooked chickpeas (recipe on page 207).
- **Basil purée:** 1 cup fresh basil leaves puréed in blender with ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil and 2 teaspoons freshly crushed garlic. Store in refrigerator for up to a month.

Valentine's Day treats for someone you love: a *Good Food, Great Medicine* gift box

A quartet of good food basics: Oregon-sourced, Mediterranean-approved, and minimally processed.

Dr. Hassell's Crackpot Cereal: A trio of intact whole grains (oat groats, whole barley, and rye berries) which turns into a hot, fragrant breakfast overnight while you sleep. Try it with whole milk, honey, nuts, and berries.

Raw Oregon Honey: Unrefined and rich in antioxidants, local pollen, and the occasional bee's knee, this honey was harvested from gardens along the Willamette River by bees who work for raworegonhoney.com, run by 3 generations of the Vollintine family in Oak Grove.

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil from Durant Olive Mill:

This is fresh-squeezed extra-virgin Arbequina olive oil from the first commercial olive mill in the NW, situated at beautiful Red Ridge Farms in Dayton. durantoregon.com

Dagoba Extra-Dark Chocolate: Smooth, rich with 84% cacao, and just the right amount of sweetness! Dagoba is thought by some to be one of the world's best chocolates – and it's made here in Oregon. dagobachocolate.com

Gift boxes are \$65: to include a copy of *Good Food, Great Medicine*, add \$30. To order, contact our office at 503.291.1777. Priority mail shipping is available for \$15 (\$20 with the book).

Please note that Monday, February 10th, at 3pm, is the last opportunity to order gift boxes for delivery by Valentine's Day (February 14th).

Speaking events and classes

1/21/2020 Providence St. Vincent Medical Center Grand Rounds: Miles Hassell MD: *Reversal of Type 2 Diabetes*. Portland, OR.

3/11/2020 and 3/18/2020 – *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.

3/26/2020 Spring Training for Primary Care 2020: Miles Hassell MD: *Good Food + Activity = Great Medicine*. Seattle, WA.

4/2/2020 – 4/23/2020 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)

² Khanji, M.Y. et al. JACC Cardiovasc Imag Dec 21, 2019