

Providence team publishes recipe book for a long and healthy life

Medical evidence supports benefits of lifestyle changes

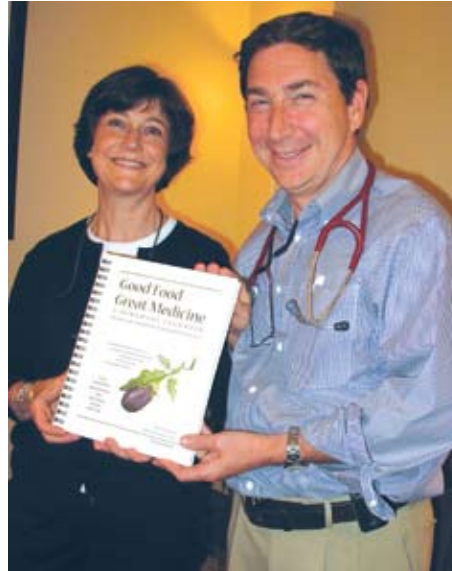
Many of us hold an image of doctors as heroes in white coats who rush in with tests and procedures to save the lives of those who are ill or injured. Less celebrated, but perhaps even more heroic, are the health professionals who do the hard work of rescuing patients by helping them make difficult lifestyle changes.

Miles Hassell, M.D., who grew up in Perth, Australia, has been at Providence since completing his internal medicine residency in 1994. He has earned a reputation as a physician who can bring patients into a state of better health through evidence-based changes in diet, exercise and avoiding risky lifestyle behaviors. He also knows that to really motivate people to change, it's better to use a carrot than a stick. More impressive, he can convince people that a carrot can be as good a motivator French fries or ice cream.

An evangelist when it comes to better living, Dr. Hassell has given hundreds of free talks and presentations to students, consumers and seniors. He's consulted with innumerable professional colleagues, and he is the founder and medical director of the Providence Integrative Medicine program at Providence Cancer Center. The program employs proven complementary and alternative therapies to alleviate the symptoms of cancer and traditional cancer therapies.

In his internal medicine practice at Providence St. Vincent, Dr. Hassell has partnered with Angela Hahn, M.D., to form the Comprehensive Risk Reduction Clinic. The clinic uses a unique practice model that focuses on helping people

reduce their risk factors for common killers such as stroke, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and dementia. Office visits are long – often an hour – and patients are given detailed coaching for follow up. Unlike office practices that primarily diagnose and treat illnesses, their services generally are not covered by Medicare or many private insurers.



Mea Hassell and Miles Hassell, M.D., display the cookbook that is motivating life changes.

“Our typical patient is someone over age 40 who became aware of being at high risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer or diabetes,” says Dr. Hassell. “These people really need and want to make changes, but they don't know how to do it on their own.”

Required reading for those facing serious disease is an extraordinary cookbook, “Good Food, Great Medicine,” written by Dr. Hassell and his sister, Mea Hassell, a journalist and cooking instructor. Now in its second edition, it

packs a compelling outline for life changes into 250 pages. It contains more than 140 tasty and nutritious recipes largely based on a Mediterranean diet, but the real focus of the book is nutrition science and life change motivation. The book explains the science behind why foods are good or bad, and it gives insights on how people, including children and compulsive snackers, can transition to healthier eating.

The new second edition includes a long chapter on preventing heart disease and heart attacks through food, exercise and the proper use of medications. (Example: antioxidant supplements and vitamin E may be harmful, so it's best to get them from food.) Other chapters address “taking steps” and “practical eating.”

“My advice to everyone is to eat well, even if you're not overweight,” says Dr. Hassell. “Following this diet will help prevent so many major diseases. We also say not to eat or drink too much, no more than two drinks a day for men and one for women, to keep junk food out of your house, and if you have a big waist, reduce it.”

If that sounds preachy, it's advice that Dr. Hassell follows himself. “To be a credible coach, you have to believe in what you tell your patients,” he says. “Many of the healthy recipes in the book are ones we had in our family. I also make time for some type of exercise every day – walking, jumping rope, ping pong or cross country skiing. If my time is limited, I climb 20 or 30 floors of stairs in our office building. Many of my patients have done these things, lost a lot of weight and now have no need for blood pressure and cholesterol medications.”

AUGUST CALENDAR

- Aug. 18 “Social Security, Disability and Cancer.” 12:30 p.m., Providence Cancer Center, Lematta Learning Center. Free.
- Aug. 19 “Response to Intervention for Educators.” Noon, Swindells Center brown bag lunch and video. Providence Child Center. Free.
- Aug. 20 “Coping with Parkinson's Disease” community forum. 7 p.m., Crowne Plaza, Lake Oswego.

- Aug. 20 “Prostate Cancer” community forum and screening, 1 p.m., PSVMC. Register at 503-215-6014 or www.providence.org/cancer.
- Aug. 24 “Strategies for Coping with Death of a Loved One.” 7 p.m., PPMC Cancer Center, Room C. Register at 503-215-4636. Free.

PROVIDENCE SPIRIT

The newsletter is published on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month for Providence Health & Services in the Portland Service Area. To submit ads and see past issues, visit the PH&S intranet. For questions about ads, e-mail or call Marianne Paradis at 503-574-9334. To submit story ideas, e-mail or call Chuck Williams at 503-574-9342. The next issue is Aug. 26; the ad deadline is 4:30 p.m., Monday, Aug. 17.