



Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 25
June 2024

Comments from Linda

Summer “break” is upon us and you should have noticed that our schedule is pretty much unchanged. There are two one-day holidays during the summer (Juneteenth on June 19th, 4th of July). We will have a short break July 4th-5th and then another entire week off in the middle of August. (Our staff does deserve somewhat of a break before the fall semester gets underway.) Be sure to check the calendar/emails for schedule notices.

Projects are always ongoing (described later). You might have noticed many new faces in our space—UC Davis continues to send their cardiac rehab graduates our way and many of you are doing awesome recruiting efforts with your friends and neighbors. Other medical programs are sending us folks too. Our program is all about modeling healthy behaviors and we are happy to get you all started on whatever path you choose from our offerings.

Parking note: We have the same arrangement for parking; if you want to have a car in the lot while attending, you should get a “CWP permit” (even if you have a disabled placard). It has a \$41 annual fee (\$1 increase) and please talk to me if this is prohibitive. New passes go from July 1st, 2024 to June 30th, 2025. The link to renew your permit online is

<https://sacstate.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/PUB/pages/2247884846/Cardiovascular+Wellness+Center>

Please talk to me about this if you are new to the process and/or need help.

Do join us this summer somewhere!

Linda



Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes,
Linda Paumer, MA
CWP Projects
Nutrition Notes,
Debbie Lucas, RD
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Universe in a Rose Petal,
Linda Larsen, RN
Exercise Reminders,
Linda Paumer, MA

CWP Projects

List compiled by Linda Paumer

Of course there are things going on this summer, and very likely you might be asked a few things if you are around. Thanks so much for helping students and the program out by joining when you can. A recap of some of our projects:

PT-assessments. We've got a wonderful project going with Dr. Dias and two students, Henry and Dan, from the Physical Therapy department. This started in May and will continue into August. I am very pleased that 51 folks were able to step up and get involved with this project. The assessments I know range from easy to challenging and whatever effort you are able to put forth is greatly appreciated. Everyone is currently doing their 2nd assessment with the 3rd one to be scheduled for the end of August. Thanks so much!

Cooking. Our kitchen activities aren't really projects, but our goal of trying something new regularly is ongoing and luckily Debbie Lucus, our dietitian, and the summer students are ready to help out here. Please feel free to offer suggestions for things you'd like to try, keeping in mind our whole-food, plant-based goals.

Monthly Potlucks. There were slow to come back after the pandemic, but we have restarted having a whole-food, plant-based potluck, usually the last Friday of the month. The recipe corner this month has a recipe Velma brought to last month's potluck. These are great opportunities to share some healthy food and also have a fun social interaction. Bringing a dish is definitely not a requirement! Please do try and attend; June 28th this month.

Fall Prevention Training. I am keeping the PT-initiated balance activities class going Fridays at 2:30 pm. We will have a new collaboration with PT with more personal student interactions when the fall semester starts in September.



High School Student Interns. We have an awesome crew of high school students joining us this summer. They all have a pre-med mentality and any insights we can impart to help their thought process there is greatly appreciated. They are here to help while they learn things about taking vitals, interacting with others, and general program management. I am hoping to have at least two intergenerational quiz days as part of their involvement and also want to get them involved with developing/maintaining our program materials. Please do try to get them to talk!

Strategies for Weight Loss (that don't include medications)

By Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

A number of you have been asking me questions about weight loss, including the new weight loss medications we are hearing so much about. You know our philosophy – food first, especially if it is whole foods and plant-based. A well-planned plant-based diet can be a great way to achieve weight loss, help you to feel better, lower risk of chronic diseases, help the planet and save money.



Benefits of Plant-Based Diets for Weight Loss:

1. **Higher Fiber Content:** Plant-based diets tend to be high in fiber, which can help keep you feeling full and satisfied, reducing the likelihood of overeating.
2. **Lower Calorie Density:** Plant-based foods tend to be lower in calorie density, meaning you can eat more volume for fewer calories per bite, making it easier to maintain a healthy weight.
3. **Increased Protein:** Plant-based diets can be high in protein (think beans, tofu, faux meats), which can help build and maintain muscle mass while losing fat.
4. **Better Nutrient Profile:** Plant-based diets tend to be rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, which can help support overall health and well-being.
5. **Reduced Inflammation:** A plant-based diet has been shown to reduce inflammation in the body, which can contribute to chronic diseases like obesity and diabetes.

Tips for a Plant-Based Diet for Weight Loss:

1. **Focus on Whole Foods:** Emphasize whole, unprocessed foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and lean proteins (think beans and greens.)
2. **Aim for Healthy Fats (but watch portions) and keep them whole:** Nuts, seeds, avocados, and olives are all great sources of healthy fats that can help keep you full and satisfied.
3. **Watch the Portion Sizes:** Even with a plant-based diet, it's easy to overeat if you're not mindful of portion sizes. Pay attention to your hunger and fullness cues.
4. **Don't Forget Probiotics:** These are good bacteria in your food. They can help support gut health and digestion, which is essential for overall health and weight loss. Think fermented foods, sauerkraut, tempeh, miso, yogurt (plant-based preferred) with live cultures.

5. Some specific foods based on a Harvard study in 2015 looking at >100,000 people:

- Beans and foods made from beans (tofu, tempeh, soy milk)
- Melons
- Citrus, even juice
- Green leafy vegetables
- Cruciferous veggies: Brussels Sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower
- Blueberries
- Ceylon cinnamon (1 tsp. a day), hot peppers (stimulates thermogenesis = after meal calorie burn), ginger

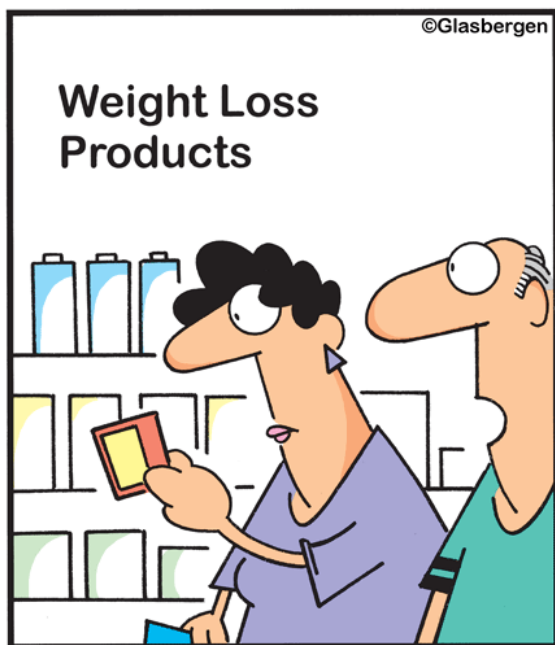
6. Follow the plate method:

- Focus on fruits, veggies, beans and whole grains.
- Have a fruit &/or veggie at each meal.
- Eat snacks if you are hungry, or it is going to be a long time until your next meal.
- Eat greens as many times a day as you can

Remember, a plant-based diet is just one part of a healthy weight loss plan. Combine it with regular exercise, stress management and social connectedness.

Should I try the new weight loss medications?

We've all been seeing commercials and reading about the injectable diabetes medications that are associated with weight loss: Ozempic and Wegovy. These are GLP-1 antagonists. People with diabetes don't seem to have enough of this, so when they take it in a medication, it helps the gut to hold on to food a little longer (= feel full), tells the liver to not send out a bunch of sugar and tells the pancreas to only send out insulin when you need it. This helps people to eat less, reduce cravings and lowers insulin resistance, hence, lower blood sugar and weight loss.



"I found an appetite suppressant that actually works. It's called *FOOD!*"

Sounds great, right? Well, there can be some side effects, including nausea, vomiting and higher risk of pancreatitis. Not to mention the high cost. Plus, if you haven't changed your lifestyle (eating better, exercising regularly, managing stress) then when you stop the medication, the weight comes back on.

My suggestion would be to try lifestyle first. If you do talk with your doctor and decide to try an injectable, then be sure to watch your blood sugars more often, because they can drop you too low. And still focus on lifestyle, so that you won't have to be on the medication forever.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have further questions about this topic or the medications or your diabetes. I would love to help!

Mongolian “Beef” with Soy Curls

From Velma , May Potluck

Ingredients

FOR THE SOY CURL "BEEF"

1 package Butler soy curls
Boiling water (enough to cover)

FOR THE SAUCE

1 Tbs cornstarch, mixed with 1 Tbs warm water
1/3 cup vegetable broth (more if the sauce gets too thick)
2-3 scallions
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp minced ginger, (or sub 1/4 tsp powdered ginger)
1 Tbs maple syrup
1/2-1 Tbs red pepper flakes
3 Tbs tamari or soy sauce
Sesame seeds (topping)



Directions

Curls. Bring pot of water to a boil, add soy curls, turn off heat and let sit for 10 minutes or until fully rehydrated. Drain curls and squeeze dry by rolling in a dishtowel. Lay on large baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Heat oven to 350°F and bake for at least 15 minutes until crispy/crunchy, turning occasionally to prevent sticking. Alternatively, could be baked in an air-fryer at 370 °F for 6 minutes, shaking the basket halfway through.

Sauce. Water sauté white parts of scallions with garlic and ginger. Once translucent, add maple syrup and red pepper flakes. Add broth and when simmering, add cornstarch mixture and tamari. Cook until it all thickens, and more vegetable broth if too thick.

Add crunchy soy curls and stir well to absorb sauce. Serve with basmati rice sprinkled with 1/2 green slices of scallions. Top generously with sesame seeds.

Adapted from: <https://www.vnutritionandwellness.com/mongolian-soy-curls/>

Mindful Practices

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

Between her 80 rose bushes and travel plans to visit family, Linda is a bit strapped for availability this newsletter. Being shared here is the handout she brought to her most recent mindfulness practice, some cues to follow regarding mindful practices. She has many great handouts posted as well on her page on our website (found on the stress management tab):



<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/linda-larsen-rn-bc%2C-ryt>

Her handout from June 17th:

MINDFUL STOP PRACTICE

S: Stop, pause. Planned and as needed in the moment

T: Take a deliberate and mindful breath, focusing on inhalation and exhalation

O: Observe: Acknowledge thoughts, feelings, and the environment without judgement.

P: Proceed Mindfully, with intentionality, choosing a response consciously.

MINDFUL PAUSE PRACTICE

Pause: what just happened, what was I doing

Check in: feeling emotionally – physical sensations with what are you thinking about?

What is ahead – moving from intention

MINDFUL BREATH PRACTICES

1) **Deep Abdominal breath**, -- *observe breath coming in/out*

And/or

2) **Breath 1:** Slowly inhale and focus attention on sensation from *heart and up* – *include hands and arms*. Hold breath at the top, observe. Slowly exhale and feel all those areas relax. Pause after the breath out to soften more.

Breath 2: Slowly inhale and focus on sensation from *heart down to low belly*. Pause at the top to feel the area expanded with breath. Slowly exhale and feel this space soften. Pause briefly after the breath out and let go of tension even more.

Breath 3: Slowly breathe and feel from *hips down through pelvic floor*. Pause at the top for a moment longer. Slowly exhale and feel tension releasing from hips and pelvic floor *all the way down through your legs*.



Gardening as Exercise, and Other Benefits

I have written and mentioned before the value of gardening as an exercise activity. Some reminders about that concept are presented here.



Earlier this month, June 6th, was National Gardening Exercise Day. Who knew? Some reminders about the benefits of gardening were mentioned then. Between digging, planting, carrying equipment, bending and everything else, gardening uses all of the major muscle groups. Add in shoveling, raking and hoeing, and you're getting a cardiovascular workout too. Add in the walking done with mowing, watering, and surveying the yard for areas needing work, and even more calories are burned. In addition to the movements made by gardeners, gardening provides mindfulness and stress relief, the mental activity of planning out your plot, and, often, a nutritious product – your fruits and vegetables!

Sharing here some gardening benefits listed in a Blue Zones blog by Jayce Lambert. Amazing how well they are aligned with the 4 pillars we focus on in the CWP.

1. **You Can Depend on It.** Studies show uncertainty affects our mental health. A neatly cut lawn or a yard full of blooming flowers can put some normalcy and certainty back into your life.

Gardening is the perfect way to balance frustration with today's "new normal." Schedule an hour a day for gardening and pruning. Having a routine is essential for our mental health, especially in times of uncertainty. Digging, pulling weeds, and pushing seeds into the earth is a holistic and healthy way to achieve balance in an unpredictable world.



2. **Green is Good** Just being outside in a green space is good for your mental health and can result in reduced stress. This effect is so well documented that psychiatric hospitals are beginning to incorporate mindful green spaces and gardens in their designs. There's also a mental health benefit to digging in the dirt. Scientists have found that stirring up microbes lifts our spirits by stimulating the production of serotonin. Maybe that's why urban planners are also looking at ways to make inner cities greener.

3. **Better Nutrition.** It's no secret that healthy eating boosts health. A diet rich in fiber also boosts your immune system. Plant an array of colorful vegetables such as sweet potatoes, eggplant, green beans, and swiss chard for a healthier menu. And if you grow your own food, it reduces the need to leave home.



4. Gardening as Exercise. Digging, pulling weeds, pushing seeds into the earth—these all count as exercise. Just a few minutes of gardening can help lower your levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Getting the proper amount of exercise also boosts your immune system. It’s not just running and biking that gets the endorphins going. Push lawn mowing burns between 250 and 350 calories an hour.

5. A Sense of Connection. Caring for a living garden, or better yet a community garden, can reconnect you

with a sense of purpose, and keep you surrounded by like-minded people.



6. Being Mindful. Activities such as pruning roses or cutting back bushes afford you the opportunity to practice being in the moment. It’s a practice that has proven mental health benefits.

7. Pride of Accomplishment. You can reap the benefits of gardening or yardwork in many ways. Don’t have a big yard? Create a balcony garden or kitchen herb garden. It’s an activity that’s proven to come with big benefits to your stress level and mood — and time well spent.

Gardening Activities	Body Weight			Seasons			
	125lbs / 57kg	155lbs / 70kg	185lbs / 84kg	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
	Calories Burned Per 30 Minutes						
Planting bulbs and small plants	120	149	178	🧑		🧑	🧑
Raking lawn	120	149	178		🧑	🧑	
Bagging up grass or leaves	120	149	178	🧑	🧑	🧑	
Mowing lawn: powered mower	135	167	200	🧑	🧑		
Planting trees	135	167	200	🧑		🧑	
Weeding	139	172	205	🧑	🧑		
Carrying & stacking wood	150	186	222			🧑	🧑
Digging	150	186	222	🧑		🧑	
Laying turf & gravel	150	186	222	🧑		🧑	
Mowing lawn: hand mower	165	205	244	🧑	🧑		
Chopping & splitting wood	180	223	266			🧑	🧑
Shoveling snow	180	223	266				🧑