



Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 20

September 2023

Comments from Linda

Doing a newsletter in September has always been on the to-do list. That list is a bit on the long side currently but of course I am getting to it all. A new semester is well on its way, bringing new faces and new energy. Be sure to read the next page with all the current and pending projects underway this fall and thanks as always for your involvement with them.

I want to express thanks to UC Davis for their continued support of our program. We have several new members in our program, many of them graduates of the UCD cardiac rehab program. We are aware our open-formatted, plethora of activities is possibly an adjustment and I want to encourage new clients to take their time adapting and finding the choices that suit them best. We really do a lot of fun things, have some helpful, informative speakers, and would love to see everyone do everything, and of course, that would never work. Please do find what works for you.

I also want to especially thank Debbie Lucus, our dietitian. She has been putting in some really fun energy and education for us and we would be super inadequate as a program without her. Isn't that ball drumming fun!

There are a few outreach efforts going on this semester and I am expecting to see even more new faces from places other than UC Davis. You will also very soon see information about a fund-raising event coming in the late fall and I will save mention of that until I know more.

Linda



Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer, MA
Program Projects, Linda Paumer
Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucus, RD
Survey Results/Tips, Britney Olson, RD intern
Recipe Corner
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CWP Projects

List compiled by Linda Paumer

Thanks so much for helping students and the program out by joining when you can. We did many fun things over the summer and have several things lined up for fall already. This list is part of the plethora of choices our program offers

6-minute walk. This one is never going off the list and asking you do this will never change. It's an important assessment that helps you keep tabs on your status and helps us validate our effectiveness as a program. If someone asks you to do this, please take 6 minutes out of your routine and try it. If you've never done it, please do so. If it's been more than 6 months since you've done it, please reassess!

Fall Prevention Training. Several of you will be participating soon with PT students in a fall prevention program. During the summer I kept the PT-initiated balance activities class going Mondays at 1:15 pm and with the new semester, the PT students are back and this session will be moving to Fridays at 2:30 pm (starting in October). Amanda is doing a wonderful job recruiting classmates for this and it is great to see that several of them are interested in helping with group balance activities. Please consider joining, either in person in our space or via Zoom.

Sleep Tracking. We collected a fair amount of data this summer with this project and thanks to those of you who submitted data. We will be looking for more participants soon, so if you have an Apple watch or similar device that can be used to track sleep, please consider participating in this project. We are asking for only two weeks of tracking data. Please talk to Linda if you would like to get involved.

Happiness/Positive Psychology. We have several psychology students this semester and a project is brewing regarding sharing activities that are joyful and thinking of new ones we can incorporate into our schedule. You'll hear more about this soon.

Gero Student Projects. . We currently have 5 gero 130/131 students, who are gerontology majors looking to do a project for presentation as a capstone project. They are on their own to come up with projects, but if any of them ask you questions pertaining to what you're getting out of our program, that means they are headed in the right direction. Time will tell, won't it?

More Cooking. Our kitchen activities aren't really projects, but our goal of trying something new regularly is ongoing and luckily Debbie Lucas, our dietitian, John, and now the new gero 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.



Nutrition Notes

from Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

I spoke a few weeks ago about dietary guidelines and what may be the best diet for us as we age – not only to add more years to our life, but in doing so, have more life in our years. We talked about the ‘Daily Dozen’ – considered to be a list of foods to include in our meals and snacks every day to improve our health and prevent chronic diseases.



This list was created by Dr. Michael Greger of nutritionfacts.org. He is the well-known author of *How Not to Die*, *How Not to Diet*, and cookbooks to go with each of those. Some of these you will find in our own library. He has a knack for looking at the research and explaining it in simple language, which he shares in his nutritionfacts.org videos and blogs. He is also getting ready to publish another book: *How Not to Age* (which I can’t wait for!).

Based on the research he reviews, he devised the Daily Dozen list of foods to include each day. In case you can’t remember the items, simply download his Daily Dozen app and click on your daily foods to see how you add up. He has a book tour coming up and he reached out to the public and offered himself up to speak to groups around the country. Thanks to Linda’s diligence, we will be lucky enough to have him with us on September 28 via Zoom for a 30 minute Q & A. On that day we will watch his 30 minute video of *How Not to Die* and then connect with him for the Q & A. We encourage you to watch his longer *How Not to Die* presentation on your own prior to the 28th so you can see what to expect and learn lots of fascinating ways to stay healthy! So save up some questions for him and see you on the 28th!

<https://nutritionfacts.org/video/how-not-to-die/c>.

Dr. Greger’s Daily Dozen



Beans



Berries



Other Fruit



Flaxseeds



Nuts



Spices



Cruciferous Vegetables



Leafy Greens



Other Vegetables



Whole Grains



Beverages



Exercise

Plant-based Diet and Cardiovascular Wellness: Insights from Survey Results and Research

By Britney Olson, dietetic intern



In July & August, participants of the Cardiovascular Wellness Program (CWP) took a survey assessing diet quality, attitudes/behaviors towards their diet, and health. A total of 38 individuals participated. A goal of this survey was to determine what factors interfere with adopting a plant-based diet, determine how many are following the plant-based diet, and assess the value of the free nutrition educational services and resources offered.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men and women living in the United States. The main modifiable risk factors for heart disease are poor diet and inactivity. However, people often struggle to make healthy lifestyle changes for various reasons like sticking to new habits, financial constraints, and understanding certain aspects of nutrition. This survey, as well as surveys from my past fellow dietetic interns, reflects the importance of making positive lifestyle changes to promote cardiovascular health.

Thank you to those who took the time to fill out the survey! It was certainly eye-opening. Here, are some particularly interesting and encouraging findings.

- A fair number of responders (42%) follow mostly a plant-based diet model but include some animal-based proteins.
- 18% of responders are completely plant-based eaters.
- Most responders (79%) know that a healthy diet provides cardiovascular benefits.
- Most responders (86%) are knowledgeable about reading food labels.
- A number of responders (41%) consume only 1-2 servings of animal proteins (including red meats) during the week.
- Some responders (29%) consume only 1-2 servings of plant-based proteins weekly.
- Most responders (77%) consume 4-5 servings of various plant-based foods (whole grains, spices/herbs, beans, fruits/veggies) weekly.
- Most responders (63%) consume fruits and veggies five or more times weekly.
- Regarding barriers for becoming a plant-based eater, 29% prefer not to and 13% state they cannot because of financial issues. Just a few (8%) state they do not know enough about it to make that choice.
- Regarding experiences with registered dietitians, 28% have never seen one, 28% have seen one and benefited greatly, 30% felt it was an okay experience, and 14% actually thought it was a terrible experience. That implies room for another try possibly.
- 40% have tried recipes at home that were tried at CWP. That is nice to see.
- Many responders (62%) indicated interest in doing a food recall with a nutrition intern, so this is clearly something to work on. If you are one of these people, reach out to Debbie Lucas at dlucusrd@gmail.com and she will get you set up!

This is just a brief run-down of some of the results. Most of you are doing great, so keep up the excellent work!

Tips for Transitioning to a Plant-Based Diet



You can gradually transition to a plant-based diet without jumping right in with both feet. Here are some tips:

- Eliminate at least two animal-based foods and replace with a healthier alternative (example: lentils, soy curls, or tofu)
 - You can refer to the CWP's recipes for ideas.
- Increase your consumption of fruits and vegetables. This can be done by adding some to every meal. Making smoothies is a great and easy way to receive adequate fruit and vegetable intake.
 - Add a new fruit or vegetable that you haven't tried before once or twice a week.
 - Try to aim for 8-10 servings of fruits /or vegetables per day.
- Cook at home more often than going to a restaurant or ordering take-out. Cooking at home will save money, and homemade meals are certainly more nutritious. Borrowing a recipe book from the CWP can provide inspiration. Sometimes it's fun cooking with someone, like a friend or child.

Here are some plant-based ingredients that you can use in place of animal-based ingredients:

Cow's milk → plant milk such as oat, almond, or soy milk

Eggs for baking → flax seed egg (mixing flax seeds with a little water)

Tip: add 1Tbsp of ground flax to 3 Tbsp of water, and let that sit for 5 minutes Scrambled eggs → tofu scramble

Processed salad dressings → dressing with natural ingredients such as seeds, vinegars, and nut butters (tahini, cashews, etc.)

- ***Here's a quick recipe:*** 3 parts vinegar, 2 parts Dijon mustard, 1 part maple syrup

Poultry → beans, legumes, lentils, soy products such as organic tofu or tempeh

Dairy yogurt → yogurt made with organic soy

Cheese → nutritional yeast, cashews, or tofu to make cream sauces for pasta, ricotta, sour cream, etc. You could also try store-bought vegan cheese alternatives.

Keep in mind that your meals don't need to be fancy. Simple meals can be very nutritious!

If you have any nutrition-related questions or topics you'd like to bring up, please don't hesitate to reach out to Linda or Debbie. All recipe handouts are free to take, and please browse the library of cookbooks. If you have any recipes you would like to see made in the kitchen, run them by Linda.

Britney did leave behind a couple of fun recipes. We tried these in the gym one Friday.

Wild Rice, Spinach and Avocado Salad

<https://mywholefoodlife.com/2013/05/06/wild-rice-spinach-and-avocado-salad-with-sesame-dressing/>



Ingredients

Salad

- 6 cups baby spinach and/or kale, chopped
- 1 ½ cups cooked wild rice
- 2 cups cooked white beans
- 2-3 cloves garlic minced or 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 avocado, sliced
- salt to taste

Dressing

- 1 T toasted sesame oil
- 3 T rice vinegar
- 3 T low sodium soy sauce or Bragg's aminos
- Juice of 1 lemon

Directions Mix greens, rice, beans, garlic and avocado together well in a large bowl. Whisk dressing ingredients together and toss with salad.

Creamy Coleslaw

<https://www.straightupfood.com/blog/2013/09/01/creamy-coleslaw/>

Ingredients

Salad

- 3 cups chopped green cabbage
- 1¾ cups grated carrots (1 to 2 medium)
- 1½ cups diced apple, peeled or unpeeled
- 1 cup chopped red cabbage
- ½ cup raisins
- ¼ cup finely chopped red onion

Dressing

- ½ cup water
- 1 cup cooked white beans
- 2 tablespoons mustard (Dijon or stone ground)
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 medium clove garlic, sliced



Directions Place all of the salad ingredients into a large bowl. Blend the dressing ingredients until smooth. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss well.

For a little variation, add ¼ cup of thinly sliced radish, celery, or fresh fennel, or ½ cup of chopped bell pepper, broccoli, cauliflower, or pineapple.

Fall Into Self-Care With Three Things

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

Fall is a great time to develop an easy to access plan for self-care breaks. You may be thinking to yourself, ‘Why do I need to do this now?’ It is very hard to think of what to do for yourself when life gets tough. A self-care break plan with three items built out will help us to incorporate consistent mindful self-compassion practices. When life’s circumstances or stressors are getting to be too much, a personalized self-care break can help manage stress, lower risk of illness, and increase your energy. Even small acts of self-care can have a big impact.

When making your plan, consider the three essential components of Mindful Self-Compassion; loving kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. Loving kindness means actively treating oneself with care and understanding. Common humanity is seeing one’s own experience as part of the larger human experience and recognizing that life is imperfect for everyone. Mindfulness is the willingness to “be” with each moment including painful feelings just as they are. Mindful and consistent self-care is vital to managing life’s inevitable stress and enhancing your well-being now and in the future. Self-care looks different for everyone, so it’s important to discover what you require and enjoy. Here are some ideas to get you started: Go outside, take a walk, garden, do nothing!



- Read a fun book, or reread a favorite book
- Take a bubble or Epsom salt bath
- Nap, rest, or sleep for at least 7 hours
- Move - Bike ride, exercise, yoga, dance
- Meditate, light a candle
- Muscle relaxation, or a full body scan
- Breathing exercises, or one deep abdominal
- Practice gratitude, could write them down or replay them in your mind
- 5 minute Pause, breathe, ground, get present
- Listen to music, sing a song,
- Say Yes to something you’re yearning for
- Journal
- Do a digital detox – push away the screens
- Watch the sunrise/sunset
- Just say No
- Take a moment to be mindful of what you have accomplished, not what you have been unable to do
- Delete something from your to-do list
- How would you treat a friend exercise (see first attached link)
- Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.
- Make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time
- Go to a movie, bowling, miniature golf
- Savor doing life’s basics: showering, etc
- Get a massage
- Ask for help, or a hug
- Cuddle with a pet

Some days you will have more time than others, so make a list of what helps you actively soothe and comfort yourself with different timeframes. Three things if you have one day, half a day, one hour, 30 minutes, and/or 15 minutes. After you’ve made your assorted ‘three things’ plans, put a copy on your phone or in your wallet so that anytime you find you’re feeling stressed you can easily remember what makes you feel centered and grounded. But don’t wait until you feel off-center: we all need to regularly schedule self-care activities like it’s non-negotiable or as important as life or death—because it is!

*“You need to put on your own oxygen mask first before trying to help others.”
-every flight attendant*

For more in depth on self-care plans, activities and why:

<https://self-compassion.org/exercise-1-treat-friend/>

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/developing-your-self-care-plan.html>

<https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/health/services/promotion/sites/healthpromo/files/fillable%20self-care%20worksheet.pdf>

<https://empoweredsenior.org/senior-health-fitness/self-care-wheel/>

Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*



Sept 18-23, 2023 is Fall Awareness Week. Catch on – there is a major effort under way to get older adults more aware of their fall risk. I'm pretty sure you know why—falling down often has dastardly results.

At the bottom this article are websites to check-out, provided by the National Council on Aging. For sure try the one that is a fall risk check-up; the others have good information. The link to the Sacramento StopFalls Coalition can direct you to balance classes throughout our community. You can also join the balance class that is going on with CWP and PT students. Next page is another self-test you can try.

Some information from the CDC:

Each year, millions of older people fall. In fact, more than one out of four older people fall each year, but less than half tell their doctor. Falling once doubles your chances of falling again.

Falls are serious and costly. One out of five falls cause a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury. Each year, 3 million older people are treated in emergency departments for fall injuries. More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways. Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries. In 2015, the total medical costs for falls totaled more than \$50 billion.

Many falls do not cause injuries. But one out of five falls does cause a serious injury, a broken bone or a head injury, making it hard for a person to get around, do everyday activities, or live on their own.

Fear of Falling. Many people who fall, even if they're not injured, become afraid of falling. This fear may cause a person to cut down on their everyday activities. When a person is less active, they become weaker and this further increases their chances of falling.

Risk Factors for Falling:

- Lower body weakness
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Difficulties with walking and balance
- Use of medicines, such as tranquilizers, sedatives, or antidepressants.
- Vision problems
- Foot pain or poor footwear
- Home hazards, like broken or uneven steps, and throw rugs or clutter that can be tripped over.

Most falls are caused by a combination of risk factors. The more risk factors a person has, the greater their chances of falling.

<https://www.ncoa.org/age-well-planner/assessment/falls-free-checkup>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/talk-to-your-doctor-6-tips-to-help-inform-your-conversation-about-falls>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/care-for-your-vision-and-hearing-5-ways-to-lower-falls-risk>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/talk-to-your-family-and-friends-5-ways-to-prevent-falls-together>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/review-medications-with-your-doctor-or-pharmacist-5-tips-for-falls-prevention-success>

<https://www.ncoa.org/article/how-to-prevent-falls-with-home-safety-modifications>

<https://dhs.saccounty.gov/PUB/StopFallsSacramento/Pages/Stop-Falls-Sacramento-Coalition.aspx>

Fall Risk Prevention

Think about the physical activity you get very day. How much of it helps with your fall risk prevention?



Balance/Gait Training Activities	Yes	No
I can stand easily with feet close together.		
I can stand easily with feet close together in staggered position.		
I can stand easily with feet in an in-line position.		
I can stand easily on one foot at a time.		
I can stand easily on one foot with knee raised to parallel to floor		

Any no's? Perhaps balance/gait training needs to be a bigger priority in your program.

Dual Tasking/Eye-Hand Coordination Activities	Yes	No
I can walk & move my head from side to side easily.		
I can walk and carry something at the same time.		
I can toss a ball up & down while walking.		
I can move my right arm and left leg at the same time.		

Any no's? Perhaps dual task/coordination activities need to be a bigger priority in your program.



Strength Activities	Yes	No
I get out of chair easily.		
I do quad strengthening exercises regularly.		
I do heel lifts regularly.		
I do toe lifts regularly.		
I do leg lifting exercises focusing on hip abduction and adduction regularly.		

Any no's? Perhaps strength training specific to fall risk needs to be a bigger priority in your program



Flexibility Activities	Yes	No
When seated, I can bring my foot on top of the opposite knee easily		
When seated, I can reach forward, bending at the waist, easily.		
When seated, I can reach high overhead on each side easily.		
When seated, I can reach cross body forward & backwards easily.		
When seated, I can reach side to side easily.		

Any no's? Perhaps flexibility training specific to fall risk needs to be a bigger priority in your program

