

Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue #8

August 2021

Comments from Linda

In June I mentioned I was hoping we could be back in operation in August and I have to admit it feels very good to have actually accomplished that. We are open for operation in Folsom Hall, of course with many COVID restrictions in place. People must be fully vaccinated to come in and we are currently wearing masks and maintaining distances. We are sanitizing ourselves and surfaces frequently. We aren't doing food currently but we are definitely getting reestablished with our exercise routines and just getting to see one another face-to-face is pretty nice (I guess I should say masked face to masked face). I am aware many of you are not ready to come back, some of you may never be ready, and it is all okay. We are developing a robust hybrid routine, and almost everything we do you will be able to log in and participate from home via Zoom if that is your preference. And the fact that you are starting to trickle back into the gym is helpful too. The first day there were six of you, and over the two weeks we've been open so far, that has about doubled. I am expecting a few more of you this coming week—all good. Please keep trying to tell me you are coming, if you are first starting/restarting.

Once you are ready to actually come in, also please be sure to talk to me about parking. . There was an email describing the new system for that—CSUS now has a vehicle ID system where your license plate is your permit, so obviously you have to apply for that to be in place. There is a reasonable fee involved (\$40 for the year). But again, please talk to me about it. Hoping to see you soon.

Linda

Lessons from Disneyland in the middle of a pandemic:

After a long stressful year of work, school and being couped up, the kids decided we should go to Disneyland for a 2 day vacation. We almost cancelled it because of the delta variant raging through the country. I am glad we did not. We learned a lot:

We were surprised with the number of people, in strollers and wheelchairs, in their masks, waiting in the sun to get on rides or get their food.

Everyone was patient, courteous and glad to be out there. Mickey, the princesses and all the characters kept their social distance with pictures with kids from 10 feet away. But the joy and magic in their step brought everyone young and old to their feet, showing how we can still share joy and love while keeping our distance.

We also saw a lot of kindness; we know the Disney employees are required to treat everyone with the utmost courtesy, but the visitors were equally courteous to them, and kind to each other. Folks, there is light at the end of this long tunnel, so be patient, meet folks with your smiles and masks on, and look for kindness and joy all around us.



Radhika Nandur Bukkapatnam, MD
Medical Director, CWP

Included in this issue:

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Program Projects Fall 2021

As some of you may know, I will soon be on the way to Puerto Rico to visit my parents. I have been anticipating this trip excitedly, because the last time we were together was two years ago. With the pandemic, it was nearly impossible for me to visit them safely. So, we did the best we could to stay connected while socially distanced. While we spoke on the phone and had family Zoom sessions during holidays, it was not the same as being able to hug them in person.



PreventionForward

Javier López, MD
Medical Director, UC Davis
Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

While many of us have been worried about the physical well-being of our loved ones during the pandemic, I have also been worried about my parents' emotional wellbeing. Because I knew that my parents were extremely cautious with distancing and sanitation, I was more worried that the pandemic caused them to be lonely and isolated. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines loneliness as "the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact." In a time when physical social distancing became vital to saving lives, I worried that my parents were becoming socially isolated, too. As the CDC describes it, I sensed that they were feeling a "lack of social connections," one of the key features of social isolation.

Social isolation is not a new phenomenon. Even before the pandemic, a report from the national academies of science, engineering and medicine noted that "approximately one-quarter of community-dwelling Americans aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated, and a significant proportion of adults in the United States report feeling lonely." I can imagine that these feelings have only increased with this pandemic. Furthermore, the report added that "people who are 50 years of age or older are more likely to experience many of the risk factors that can cause or exacerbate social isolation or loneliness, such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, chronic illness, and sensory impairments." Therefore, the already present issues of social isolation and loneliness have affected our communities even more than normal. I have written about loneliness previously in this newsletter. I tend to return to this topic because I recognize the immensity of isolation. We are social creatures and relating to one another is part of who we are. This pandemic is testing our limits of how long we can stay away from each other and still feel well. We are constantly trying to find a balance between limiting our physical proximity with others, without sacrificing our social nature. It is a tough negotiation, and I'm sure many of you have struggled with loneliness in the past year. I know that I have.

Recognizing the power of loneliness on our health and wellbeing, I have learned firsthand that centering family and community is a way to heal emotionally during this difficult time. I am reflecting on what we are doing at CWP during this pandemic, and the ways that we are encouraging one another and lifting this community up. I'm very encouraged by the improved rates of vaccinations; these vaccines are imperative to eliminating viral spread in our community. I am also excited by your efforts to stay connected with one another through Zoom and to continue to learn! This desire to learn and share with one another is almost like an antidote for loneliness -- kudos to you! Lastly, I am encouraged by our ability to begin meeting in-person. I applaud your effort, albeit with some considerations in mind. Continuing precautions is critical to maintaining a healthy environment that will sustain the CWP programs. Vaccinations, masking, hand sanitation and some distancing are all powerful tools to manage the pandemic so that we can increase our social connections.

With that in mind, I wish you the best in your return to the gym. I look forward to visiting with you all in person on my return. Meanwhile, stay well and stay united.

References: CDC site <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>
<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25663/social-isolation-and-loneliness-in-older-adults-opportunities-for-the>



The “new normal”?

In my world as the Dean of a large college over the past year, I have had the opportunity to engage with hundreds of people, mostly virtually, as they have shared their experiences and life stories over the past 18 months. At times it has felt like I am standing in the middle of a large surreal viewing room, watching the ongoing and evolving screening of a movie titled, “*Coping with the Pandemic*”. Day after day, the frames click past my view, sometimes rapidly, other times in a freeze-frame fashion and occasionally, a stall. I get to either catch a fleeting glimpse or experience a longer moment. Frames of a life, a group, a story – invitations to listen, interact with the character(s) in the frames, or not. The cast is widely diverse in all ways. While the frames often reflect those I interact with most frequently, there is a whole range of others who enter the scenes intermittently, infrequently, or in crisis. The content of the “script” has shifted over time from a focus on shock, disbelief, anxiety, grief, and others, to anger, resolve, adaptation, expressions of silver linings, and more recently, a slow acceptance and emergence. Movement toward a “new normal”. A focus on what we can control. Maybe “new normal” is an overused descriptor, but what choice do we have? Even though there have been dark and deeply unsettling times during the pandemic, my seat in the middle of the viewing room gives me hope that we will keep the best of what we have learned and infuse the many lessons into our lives as we move forward. Things that we “knew” to be true and important but are now more than just words. The resilience of humans. The need for community, access for all, grace, tolerance, flexibility, understanding and appreciation of how connected we are to others, near and far. And too many other lessons to list. The Cardiovascular Wellness Program embodied many of these truths before COVID-19 entered our lives. Lesser programs have struggled and folded. I am well aware of the challenges ahead but this community has withstood many tests; this is a big one. There are still challenges ahead as the virus continues to thrive, but the energy, hearts, and spirit of the people associated with this program are strong. Thank you to all of the participants, families, friends, volunteer staff, students, faculty, pro bono professionals, and our backbone, Linda Paumer, for keeping us going. I am so happy we will be sharing space again in whatever form that takes. I am ready to move from the movie viewing room to reality and to hear the magic words, “that’s a wrap!”

Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*

I found this picture of an old bottle cap and I am including it as it speaks really well to how I am feeling about our program participants and your exercise programs. Those of you that have stuck with me on Zoom the past 17 months are doing some very admirable things, and our flexibility, strength, and endurance have benefited greatly. Those of you that are now getting back on track with an exercise routine should be commended too. Together we are going to work together to make sure physical activity stays in the forefront of our wellness lifestyle. I am very proud of you all, and yes, I always feel like I’m your mom. That is why I expect you to just do what I say and not bellyache about it!



Regarding getting back into an exercise routine if you’ve been off for awhile: Please use your brain as you get restarted. It is unrealistic to expect that you can pick up where you left off. Spend a few weeks rebuilding please. Start with no more than ½ of what you used to do. If you were doing 60 minutes of cardiovascular activity, start with 20-30. If you were doing 20 minutes, start with 10. And start at a reduced, comfortable intensity. Spend 2-3 weeks rebuilding your exercise duration, and once you have regained the ability to last as long as you wish (15-60 minutes), then you should focus more on how hard you are working. Please talk to staff and share your approaches for getting in shape.

Memory, Maturity & Music



Are you over 65?
Do you know how to
complete an online survey?

The CSUS Cardiovascular Wellness Program is inviting you to participate in a project to evaluate the connections between musical ability and cognitive function. Participation is simple but does require computer/internet access on your part. If you elect to do the study, you will be asked to do 3 things:



- 1) complete an on-line survey regarding your history with music and singing (you do not need to be a musician or singer to participate)

https://csus.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5duxctzIF3hwZWm

- 2) complete a 2nd on-line survey with questions about memory

https://csus.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_37tMINcSiQa9kqi

- 3) once you have completed the two surveys, you will be sent a link for an additional neurocognitive test that you will complete on your own computer. This is another memory test with some problem solving tasks. Research staff will give you guidance.



There is no compensation for participating in this project but you will greatly add to the body of knowledge and help older adults learn things about themselves. Your participation is greatly appreciated and once completed you will receive information regarding the findings.



To sign up, please email csuscwvwellness@gmail.com. If confident of your abilities, you can go directly to 1st link cited above.

Eating for Brain Health

By Debbie Lucus

Most people have had someone in their lives touched by brain health problems such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Dementia is the umbrella term used for a group of symptoms that involve declining memory and thinking skills. AD is the most common form of dementia. It expresses itself in

memory, thinking and behavioral problems that may eventually affect a person's ability to perform daily tasks. It is a heartbreaking progression of symptoms and deterioration that is very difficult to watch as loved ones lose their memory, personality and ability to care for themselves. Once the progression of AD has begun, there is little that can be done; prevention appears to be the key.

That is where our lifestyles come in. About 90% of Alzheimer's may be prevented with the right lifestyle. What does that look like? Well, it looks like everything you have been doing in the Cardiovascular Wellness Program! Nutrition plays a huge role, as does exercise, stress management, good sleep and cognitive challenge and connections. I'll focus on nutrition here.

Foods to include in your 'brain health' meal plan are:

1. Anti-inflammatory foods: fruits, veggies, whole grains, beans and legumes, including:

- Dark leafy greens, berries (blue-, black-, straw-), mushrooms, beets
- Quinoa, oats, intact whole grains
- Sweet potatoes, beans & legumes, soy
- Cruciferous veggies – broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels

2. Foods low in saturated and trans fatty acids: minimally processed foods such as fruits, veggies, whole grains, beans and legumes (sound familiar?)

3. Foods low in calorie density but high in nutrient density (ie. lower calories per bite, but packed with nutrition): Fruits, veggies, whole grains, beans and legumes (I know, I'm sounding like a broken record)

4. Plant-based foods: Fruits, veggies, whole grain, beans and legumes (of course!). Animal foods (meat, dairy, eggs) should be avoided because they are generally inflammatory, higher in saturated fats and higher in nutrient density.

5. Lots of herbs and spices: this contain phytonutrients that help fight oxidation and inflammation. Include: Turmeric (but add a pinch of black pepper when you have it to increase its bioavailability), cilantro, dill, rosemary, thyme, oregano, basil, mint and parsley (these contain 10 times the antioxidants of nuts and berries)



6. Vitamin E and Omega-3 fatty acid-rich foods: nuts, seeds, healthy fats (avocados, olives). Notice fish isn't listed here because along with Omega-3s, fish brings mercury and other toxins.

7. Tea: black, green, Oolong. Teas contain a phytonutrient that helps to activate enzymes that clear toxins and are powerful anti-inflammatory beverages.

You probably noticed the trend in the above list: a whole-foods, plant-based diet takes care of it all! Fruits, veggie, whole grains, beans & legumes are my mantra. They are the basis of the most healthful diet for not only our brains, but our heart health, blood pressure, diabetes and weight. Taking care of those health issues reduces risk of developing Alzheimer's. If you aren't quite ready to go 'all-in', then remember as you make changes to improve your health, steer clear of these foods:

1. Processed foods – foods that are not like nature intended (i.e. there are no Cocoa Pebbles in nature)
2. Processed meats – such as lunch meats, sausage, pepperoni, etc. (and no, these don't occur in nature)
3. Red meat & chicken – high in saturated fats
4. Butter and margarine – high in saturated fats
5. Fried food and fast food – high in trans fats
6. Cheese – high in saturated fats. See recipe corner for to a recipe for Tofu Chevre. Sounds terrible, but actually quite tasty.
7. Pastries and sweets – high in sugar and unhealthy fats. Don't worry, you can make whole food 'sweets' that are much better for you. I have been wanting to try the chickpea-cookie-dough recipe I found.

Don't forget that it isn't only about nutrition (although we dietitians tend to think that is what everything is all about). You also want to focus on daily activity, getting a good night's sleep, managing stress and keeping your brain challenged (think: learning a new language or playing an

instrument) as well as connecting with people/family/friends. I feel so blessed to be a part of the Cardiovascular Wellness Program where we work on all those areas in order to take care of ourselves. We focus on our hearts, and who knew? We also take care of our brains!!!



Tofu Chèvre

RECIPE CORNER

Yield: 1 8-inch log

Ingredients

- 1 package extra firm tofu
- 1 ½ T white miso
- 1 T olive oil
- ½ T tahini
- ½ T lemon juice
- ¼ tsp sea salt

Directions

1. At least 1 day ahead, press your tofu. The less moisture, the better. Lay a clean kitchen towel on a plate and place the tofu on the kitchen towel. Cover with another clean towel, place a heavy pan on top of that, with 2-3 14oz. cans on top of that. Refrigerate overnight.
2. Once the tofu is sufficiently pressed, break it into pieces and place in the bowl of a food processor. Add the rest of the ingredients and process until a smooth ball forms. If it isn't coming together, add olive oil by the 1/2 tsp. You will need to scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl a few times to fully incorporate all the ingredients.
3. Remove the tofu mixture and place it on a large piece of plastic wrap. Form it into a basic log shape, then wrap the plastic wrap around it. Place the log in the refrigerator and chill for at least 3-4 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Remove the log from the plastic wrap and place on the baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven when the log is slightly tan on the outside, but still creamy. Place baking sheet on a cooling rack and let it cool. If not using immediately, store the log in an air-tight container in the refrigerator. It will last about 3 days.

from *But I Could Never Go Vegan!* by Kristy Turner, <https://keepinitkind.com/tofu-chevre/>



Edible Chickpea Cookie Dough

A cookie dough meant to be just eaten!

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas (1 can)
- ⅓ cup nut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons almond flour
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened almond milk
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup semi-sweet dark chocolate chips

Directions

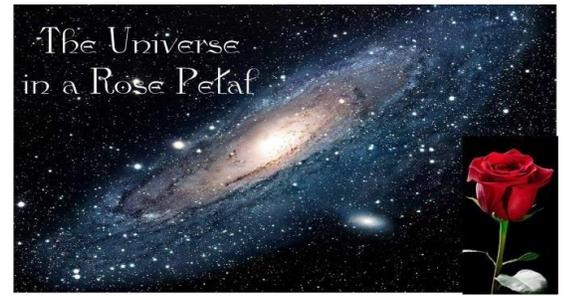
Rinse and drain chickpeas. Place in food processor with nut butter, vanilla, almond flour, maple syrup, almond milk, and salt. Process until creamy, stopping to scrape down sides periodically. Move dough to a medium bowl and add chocolate chips, mix well throughout. Keep in an air tight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.



<https://chefabbiegellman.com/chickpea-cookie-dough/>

Be By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

While scrolling down her Instagram page, the Universe in a Rose Petal was reminded of her lesson plan to simply “be.” Often when sharing the Zen Proverb - “Before Enlightenment chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment chop wood, carry water.” It is misunderstood.



This surfing metaphor “No paddle. No Surf.” illustrates impeccably that much of our everyday mindfulness practice of “living in the moment” is full of challenging, difficult or routine and boring tasks. If a surfer doesn’t paddle, he can’t get to the big wave. For me, weeding, deadheading, feeding, digging holes for planting roses is often hot and tedious work and not an easy choice to do on any given day. However,



consistent maintenance is an essential part of having roses to enjoy with the eyes and nose. No Effort. No Roses. My mindfulness practice allows me to be with weeding, deadheading, etc nonjudgmentally, awake to the experience of my life in the present moment. When I stay present with what’s important to me – for me, the rose, for others the wave – and I take a breath when the difficulties overtake me, then I can return, time and again, to the connection between my daily tasks and my joy. This mindfulness helps me to be in full acceptance of each moment.

This summer - the Universe in a Rose Petal encourages you to BE - Be with people, Be with tasks, Be PRESENT. Be LOVE

CWP Fall Projects

Fall semester starts soon, and of course it is always delightful when the students are around (as long as we can find parking places). Some of the projects to look forward to this fall:

- 1) Nursing/PT student interactions. The partnership we have established with nursing students continues, augmented this fall with a similar partnership with physical therapy students. These students are grateful for one-on-one interactions, and ask general questions about health care management. They learn things by chatting with those who have gotten this far in life with or without issues. We have a project unfolding soon on fall prevention driven by these students.
- 2) Maturity, music & memory project. Started in July, we would appreciate your involvement with this project whether or not you are musical (non-musicians serve as well-needed control subjects). The entire project is done online so obviously you need to know how to complete an online survey to participate. Now that we are open, it would be okay for you to complete this project on a computer in Folsom Hall, so don’t be surprised if you are asked about that.
- 3) Gero, nutrition, psychology students – We will have two returning gero students and two new gero students this fall. We should also have two nutrition and two psychology students. Some we will continue to see only on Zoom, but most of them are anxious to be in-person and come into the gym for live interactions. It will be fun to finally see people we have gotten to know on Zoom.
- 4) Research students – In addition to the music project we will collect outcomes as people start to come back and work on getting back into a wellness groove. Your willing attitude to participate in projects is always appreciated. Declining to participate is always respected too.