

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue #4

December 2020

## Comments from Linda

We are now more than 6 months into our at-home mode, and I am proud to say we seem to have developed some pretty fair coping strategies. I am grateful to you all for giving me such a strong sense of purpose and I will admit to having some fun trying to think of new challenges, both physical and mental, for us all. Look for more of that with the new year!

Yes, we will continue in this virtual format for at least one more semester, with strong hopes of doing something live come late spring/summer. So many unknowns right now! I appreciate very much each and every one of your connections—whether it is seeing you on Zoom meetings, the emails you send with comments or humor, or the calls you make. Thank you for participating in the various surveys that have come out—those help the students greatly and we will have more of that in the coming semester. Please continue to reach out and let us help you stay connected!

*Linda*

### Included in this Issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer  
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Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucus  
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Bonus: Winter Break Bingo

## Notes of Gratitude

First of all, let us thank you and Dr Kappagoda for initiating this wonderful program. Many thanks to Dianne and Sac State for providing all the support for the program. Thanks to all the faculty, staff and students who have, at various times shared their knowledge, their curiosity and their learning with all of us. Thanks to all the volunteers who help run things smoothly and thanks to all our participants for your time, for all the effort in learning how to use technology, and joining these online classes that inspire us to learn more, so we can share current knowledge. A special shout out to Dave and Linda for making the time to do all the exercise classes so regularly. It takes each and every one of you to make this wonderful experience.

I am truly grateful to be a small part of this program, and hope to see you all, happy, healthy and safe in the year ahead. Have a safe Holiday season! Radhika



Radhika Nandur Bukkapatnam, MD  
Medical Director, CWP



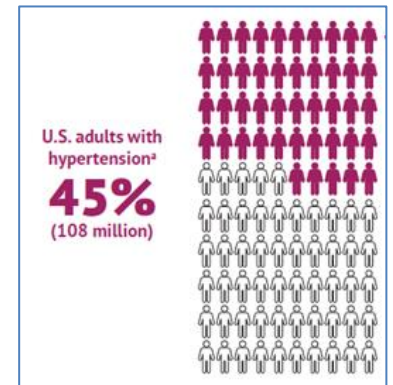


Javier López, MD  
 Medical Director, UC Davis  
 Cardiac Rehabilitation Program

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for and people of most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Hypertension is unfortunately common and a big reason why many of us die of preventable causes of heart disease. The U.S. Surgeon General, Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH, recently issued a ***Call to Action to Control Hypertension\**** to provide strategies for those on the frontlines of health care and public health to address this costly, dangerous and far too common chronic health condition. In his report he states “*I’ve seen firsthand the devastating effects of hypertension. Left uncontrolled, it leads to heart attacks, stroke, kidney disease, and cognitive decline in later life, and it can impact mother and baby during and after pregnancy.*” I too have seen the impact of uncontrolled hypertension and share with him this view.

When we start looking at the 108 million people in the US living with hypertension, we find a great deal of complexity and disparity. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is common; and certain groups of people are more likely to have high blood pressure than others.

- A greater percent of men (47%) have high blood pressure than women (43%).
- High blood pressure is more common in non-Hispanic black adults (54%) than in non-Hispanic white adults (46%), non-Hispanic Asian adults (39%), or Hispanic adults (36%).
- Among those recommended to take blood pressure medication, blood pressure control is higher among non-Hispanic white adults (32%) than in non-Hispanic black adults (25%), non-Hispanic Asian adults (19%), or Hispanic adults (25%).



Over the next few months, I will be reviewing with you some of the details of his report; I’m hoping that together we can begin to understand how this condition affects our community and that of those at the highest risk. Only by having a better understanding of the issues around this condition, we can respond to his call: “Join me in taking control of hypertension across our nation. *Together, we’ve got this!*”

\*<https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/index.html>

If you are reading this newsletter, I am making the assumption that you are connected in some way to the amazing community that is the Cardiovascular Wellness Program at Sacramento State. And I will assume that you have some choice and freedom in your life. The choice to read or not to read this. The freedom to engage or not to engage. At the basic core, freedom and choice are gifts to be most grateful for. I have had to work hard many times this year to keep my chin up, as most of us have, and stay grateful for what I have. To try not to focus on what we have lost in this year of 2020. I have particularly tried not to dwell on the lost ability to move freely through my life. But the events of this year, beyond the pandemic, have been a stark reminder that we do not all have the same ability to move freely through our life. There is unequal freedom and unequal choice, not just in other parts of the world, but right here at home in the USA. And these inequalities trickle into every part of life, including access to health care. The Cardiovascular Wellness Program, in partnering with campus resources, students, and personnel, was initiated with the goal of expanding access to preventive care and support for all. Dr. Tissa Kappagoda, the program founder, had a long standing commitment to addressing disparities in all areas of life. As such, the program is a community where all are welcomed and where the goal of eliminating unequal freedoms remains front and center. I think of this Cardiovascular Wellness Program when I read the sentiments of anthropologist Margaret Mead who expressed that a few committed people could change the world. For this program and the people like Linda Paumer who continue to make it what it is, I am truly grateful. No matter what year it is.



Dianne Hyson, Dean, College of Social  
 Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies

## Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*

**Regular reminder:** *Are you getting 30 minutes of cardiovascular activity (walking, biking) most days of the week?? Are you doing some resistance exercise a couple of days a week? Are you doing any stretching? If you aren't exercising with our group, please make sure you are doing things on your own!*

My only reminders for this season are the above. Please make sure you are staying active. Strive for some level of consistency, even if it's only one or two days a week of something. Anything is better than nothing; moving is the most important thing you can do for yourself.

## Recipe Corner

Those around last year when we had our November event remember we made soup mixes that would have been excellent items for giving. Those came from <https://wholefully.com/christmas-food-gifts/>. Another idea from that website is included here.

### Homemade Golden Milk Mix

*This Homemade Golden Milk Mix could also be called "Sweet and Spicy Anti-inflammatory Turmeric Latte," but that doesn't have quite the same ring to it. Make some for yourself, or as a great homemade gift!*

#### Ingredients

- 2 whole vanilla beans OR 2 teaspoons vanilla bean powder
- 1/3 cup ground turmeric
- 2 tablespoons ground ginger
- 2 tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 1/3 cup date sugar (or less to taste preference)
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- Airtight container for storage

#### Directions

##### To Make the Mix:

If using whole vanilla beans, slice the beans in half lengthwise using a sharp knife. Scrape the vanilla flecks out of all four halves into a medium bowl. OR, if using vanilla bean powder, add that to a medium bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and stir well to combine. Store in an airtight container. Should last up to a month.

##### To Make Golden Milk:

Combine two heaping tablespoons of the Golden Milk Mix with 8 ounces of heated milk. Whisk until frothy and smooth (a frother works for this, too!). Sprinkle top with additional cinnamon or turmeric, if desired. Enjoy!

**Notes:** You could add 1 cup powdered milk to the mix and then make it with boiling water. Date sugar is just dried and ground-up whole dates. Sub in equal amounts of another dry sweetener (sugar, maple sugar, sucanat, etc.) if preferred.





## **Focusing on Gratitude** by Debbie Lucas, RD, CDE

Gratitude is one of those things that is easy to feel when things are going our way, but during this strange and frightful 2020, it is a bit tougher. I met with a friend today who told me that she was grateful for adversity – because she learned from it and it made her stronger.

The science of gratitude has found that when people find the positive in trying times or situations, it helps them to feel better, be healthier and improve their ability to deal with the next crisis. In

addition, the good times are even sweeter when we have some tough times to compare them to. On a much simpler and less stressful note, I thought I would share some of my favorite things to be grateful for:



1) **Good health for my family and myself:** I am so proud of my family for staying healthy, being active and moving more towards a plant-forward eating style.

2) **Free websites, YouTube and podcasts:** I seem to spend a lot of time on websites or listening to podcasts and am so appreciative of sites that give so much knowledge and recipes at no cost. Some of my favorites:

- Forks over Knives.com - while website is free, you can also pay for an app with many more recipes
- PCRM.org (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine – a great start for getting started on plant-based eating. Try the 21 day Kickstart if you haven't already made the transition)
- Plantstrong.com - Engine 2: for recipes and an awesome podcast
- Fatfreevegan.com – so many amazing recipes (thank you, John, for telling me about this one)
- Brandnewvegan.com – another one I have to thank John for. So many great recipes and they do an excellent job modifying for restrictions, such as oil-free
- Ohsheglows.com – one of my favorite cookbooks and I've never had a recipe that I didn't like
- Ann & Jane Esselstyn YouTube cooking videos: A mother-daughter team related to the big names in whole food plant-based diets. They are a kick to watch and have awesome recipes.
- There are so many more – we really need to check John's list!:

### 3) **Kitchen Technology.**

- My new dehydrator . I'm loving my new Nesco dehydrator. I have had fun with fruits so far (apples, persimmons, pears), and can't wait to try veggies (ie. kale chips) and crackers. This is an excellent way to preserve our seasonal bounty.
- Instant pot: You are probably tired of hearing me say how much I love this gadget. It has been life-changing, especially allowing me to make beans from scratch without pre-soaking. 'Instant' is a misnomer, because things still take time, but it is nice to just throw everything in a pot turn it on a forget it. It has taken the place of my rice cooker, crockpot and pressure cooker – so room for more gadgets!
- Food Processor: I can't imagine my kitchen without this gadget. I chop everything in it and it is such a timesaver. I love that it has a grate attachment (ie. grated carrots) and a slicing attachment (ie. for thinly slicing cucumbers). One of my favorite things to make in it: Nice Cream (blended frozen bananas with a little plant milk)

### 4) **Harvest Bounty**

Mandarins: I live in Placer County and mandarins are for sale on nearly every corner this time of year. Everyone here knows that Placer-grown mandarins are the best; so much better than those Cuties we buy at the grocery store. I don't know why – maybe it is the soil or they are just grown with love. I am sorry for their short season – they come out in November and usually are gone in January. The good news is that they last for a long time!! I buy several 10 pound bags and leave them in the pantry, pulling out a few as needed. Depending on the size, a mandarin is about 50 calories, 10-15 grams carbohydrate, 2 grams fiber and 25% of your daily vitamin C. They are easy to peel and make the perfect snack. You can also add them to dark salad greens with some red onion, avocado, sliced

almonds and add a tasty vinegar for the dressing. Try dicing them up in a fruit cup, into your tacos, on a fruit pizza, make into a salad dressing. Stock up on this local fruit before they are gone!

Persimmons: These are another yummy treat that is available for just a short period in the fall. There are 2 types of persimmons in our area: the Fuyu – almost like a small orange apple, and the Hachiya – heart-shaped and eaten when it gets very soft. The Hachiyas are usually used in baking. Depending on size, one persimmon is about 80-100 calories, 15-25 grams carbohydrate, 6 whopping grams of fiber, an excellent source of vitamin A, C, potassium and B vitamins. The Fuyus can be eaten just like an apple, or I have been having a lot of fun dehydrating them. They can also be cut into wedges and put onto salads. The Hachiyas are used in breads, cookies, and puddings.

5) Last, but certainly not least – I am grateful for the **Cardiovascular Wellness Program** staff, student volunteers and participants. It is my honor to work with you all and I am so thankful you have hung in there during this pandemic. It could not be done without Linda who has kept us healthy with her mastery of fun exercises and Zoom and the student volunteers who teach us new things every week – Thank you!

## Persimmon and Orange Salad

By David Tanis, from The New York Times

*Squat, roundish Fuyu persimmons are the ones to use raw in salads. Paired with sweet oranges and watercress, they make a refreshing salad. They barely need dressing at all, but a little sherry vinegar adds brightness.*

### Ingredients

- 1 small shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon fruity olive oil
- 4 navel oranges
- 4 Fuyu persimmons
- 1 bunch watercress, curly cress, or upland cress, optional



### Directions

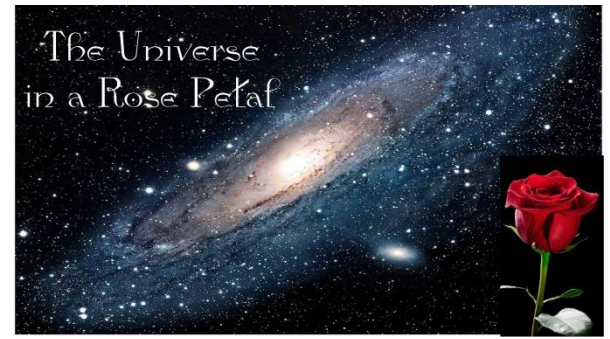
1. Put the shallot and vinegar in a small bowl and macerate 5 minutes. Add a pinch of salt and a little pepper. Whisk in the olive oil.
2. With a serrated knife, peel the oranges, then slice into 1/2-inch rounds. Arrange the orange slices on a platter.
3. Peel the persimmons, cut into 1/2-inch thick slices or wedges and arrange over the oranges.
4. The salad can be covered and refrigerated up to 3 hours. Just before serving, whisk the dressing again and drizzle over the fruit. Garnish with watercress sprigs, if you like.

Yield 8 to 10 servings

## Practicing Mindfulness

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

Why do we have mindfulness as a CWP component? Mindfulness has been proven to have a beneficial effect on the entire body, and specifically on the heart and brain! Benefits include reduced anxiety and depression, feeling more calm and relaxed, improved concentration, better sleep and a stronger immune system. Mindfulness meditation--practicing being present in the moment--trains us to become more mindful throughout the day, particularly during difficult situations. This is part one of a two part series to aid beginning a meditation practice.



Meditation does not mean you are in a “cone of silence:” everything you hear, sensations you feel, and thoughts you think are all part of meditation. Research has shown that persistent one pointed focus (and if distracted bringing the mind back to the focus) strengthens your brain to stay in the present moment and not project into the past or future. The evidence-based benefits of meditation are not based on body position, but are gained from the mind’s non-judgmental return to the focus when distracted. Upright sitting comfortably straight and noble is common practice, but if that is not comfortable for you, you can lie flat if you are not sleepy. Give yourself permission to modify/or reposition so the focus can be on the practice and not on maintaining your posture.

Intentionally make a choice about the placement of your hands. They could be folded in your lap, rested palms up or down, or the fingers of one hand rested atop the fingers of the other with the thumb tips gently touching. Try different hand positions to see how the energy changes and what feels comfortable. You may wish to place the tip of your tongue against the palate/that ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire practice. Your eyes may be closed or open with your gaze dropped and not really focusing on anything, simply allow the eyes to rest.

Designate a couple of areas in your home for your practice, allowing flexibility to maintain consistency when you are traveling. Experiment to find the best time that you will not be disturbed, I highly suggest from my teacher davidji - Rise-Pee-Meditate (RPM) and/or Right-After-Work (RAW).

Foremost meditation teachers recommend 5-15 minutes duration for **beginners and** 5-45 minutes twice a day ideally *long term*. Even 5 minutes regularly once a day has been shown by research to be beneficial: the important aspect is consistency. Ideally, choose an amount of time that you feel highly committed to doing every day. When we repeat patterns over and over, the brain creates new neuropathways, and if the repeated pattern is meditation, these new pathways in the brain are training us to be calmer and more present in the moment.

*“Meditation is a training of our attention, It allows us to step out of distracted thought, and helps us arrive in the present moment in a balanced and clear way.” -Tara Brach*



## Winter Break Challenge!

How many bingos (5 in a row) can you get by Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>?

Wall sit for 60 sec OR 25 squats	Stretch routine for at least 15 min	Bike ride (outdoor or stationary) for at least 15 min	Eat no animal products all day (including baked goods)	Completed at least 20 min mindfulness practice
Walk 20 min outdoors wearing a holiday hat	Communicate (talk/email) with a fellow program participant	Ate 5 cups of fruit and/or vegetables today	Did at least 25 crunches or plank for 30 seconds	Resistance exercise routine for at least 15 min
Got 7 hours of sleep last night—woke up feeling very rested	Walk 20 min outdoors wearing a holiday hat	free CWP free	Stretch routine for at least 15 min	Eat no animal products all day (including baked goods)
Completed at least 20 min f mindfulness practice	Eat no animal products all day (including baked goods)	Walk 20 min outdoors wearing a holiday hat	Ate 5 cups of fruit and/or vegetables today	Resistance exercise routine for at least 15 min
Eat no animal products all day (including baked goods)	Resistance exercise routine for at least 15 min	Stretch routine for at least 15 min	Got 7 hours of sleep last night—woke up feeling very rested	Communicate (talk/email) with a fellow program participant

**Donation Information:** This is not a solicitation. I am aware some of you have interest in making end-of-the-year donations and of course donating to our program is still an acceptable concept. Details for making donations, either to the Foundation for Health or to Sac State, are posted on our webpage. Ask Linda if you have questions. Our website:

<https://cardiovascularwellnessprogram.org/>