



Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue 10

December 2021

Comments from Linda

The end of the year is always a good time to reflect on the past 12 months and acknowledge the good and the bad things that have happened. As I think about 2021, I find it is a complete blur with 2020. We lost that year to a pandemic and we still haven't really gotten back to normal operating procedure. I find myself thinking back and wondering about things that we did "pre-COVID" and as long as mask-wearing prevails, I am thinking a "post-COVID" concept is not here yet. Maybe sometime in 2022....

Despite the nebulous state of affairs, we soldier on. We have been having in-person sessions since August and it does feel good. Things continue on the quiet side, but we actually are getting new participants while waiting for some of you to return. Our space does feel really safe. We tried a new soup recipe last week and are excited to think about having more food together soon. Our "hybrid" program is going well; we offer all of our sessions, both exercise & education, as Zoom meetings and joining us in the gym is a choice too. Our program is all about choices, isn't it?

We are taking a short winter break over the holidays but will be back in action the 1st of the year. When you come in, the COVID protocol is still in place: you must be fully vaccinated, we are wearing masks and maintaining distances. When you're ready to come back, be sure to talk to me about parking. I do expect that you will all be back someday!

Linda



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

As we look ahead to the holidays and the hope for more people and classes on campus and some semblance of "normalcy" in spring, I feel grateful for the energy, resilience, and community of the Cardiovascular

Wellness Program. A special thank you to those who keep the wheels in motion even when the going gets tough: Linda, Mary, David and the entire team of volunteers, professionals, faculty, students, and participants who show up - on screen and off. This is a special and unique program. Here is to more and better in 2022! Warm wishes to all.

Included in this issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer, MA
Dean's Note, Dianne Hyson, PhD
Medical Director Notes, Radhika Bukkapatnam, MD
PreventionForward, Javier López, MD
CWP Projects
Exercise Reminders, Linda Paumer
Recipe Corner
Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucas, RD
Universe in Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN





Radhika Nandur Bukkapatnam, MD
Medical Director, CWP

Take Heart During the Holidays: This is a most wonderful time of the year, and the most stressful on your heart: the cold weather, the salty food, the stress of visitors, the lonesome holidays, missing near and dear ones and stressing about words said and unsaid, is it really the most wonderful time of the year?



Here are some things you can do to protect yourselves: Double check your medicine supplies, make sure that you have enough, watch out for salty food, and if you are meeting near and dear ones, keep low sodium foods at home, so you do not exceed the limits. If you are spending the holidays quietly by yourselves, make a list of low sodium, delicious foods, lots of good movies and avoid drama that bothers you. Give and receive with love, avoid topics that can divide the family (such as vaccines and politics), and if unkind words are thrown at you, dust it off. We have all survived a global pandemic and as a family kept each other's spirits up. So be thankful, enjoy the holidays and look forward to a happy healthy 2022!!

This season, more than ever, I would like to encourage all of us to reach out to friends, families, and other members of the CWP community to stay connected. Prevention of chronic diseases is about living a healthy and an enjoyable life. Joy in this season may have the colloquial “Joyful carols” overtone, but I’m thinking about something simpler. Something that should cost a lot less and requires very little time for planning. It for sure should not need any shipping or handling- the postal service will be happy about that! Or need for you to even leave your home. If you can’t guess by now, I am not talking about an item, but rather an action; and a healthy one at that.



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

If you remember my article on the August 2021 CWP newsletter, I spoke about loneliness as “the feeling of being alone, regardless of the amount of social contact.” The Holidays are times where some of us may feel lonelier than others despite not being alone. As I reflect on the end of the year, our prevention efforts, and this Holidays, I kindly ask you to consider- what can I do about loneliness? Maybe a phone call, maybe a Zoom chat message, maybe a well-seasoned note in the mail, or maybe a smile at the store (tough with the mask- but eyes are still very telling)- regardless, think on what actions can you take to let others know- we are here, we care, we have time! It is amazing how little it could sometimes take to let other know we are interested on being connected; can you do that for me?

Most importantly, stay well and I wish all of you a better New Year!



CWP Projects

Thanks for helping students and the program out by joining the various projects that took place Fall semester. We had both in-person and virtual interactions. Some of the projects will restart when the new semester starts so if you missed participation in these projects, be mindful there could be another chance soon. Some highlights:

- 1) Several of you are interacted with PT and nursing students and got lots of good, professional help, focusing on fall prevention. There will be something similar next semester, but no details as yet.
- 2) The Maturity, Memory & Music project is wrapping up and we have had a couple of educational sessions which reviewed goals for that project. If you didn't participate, there is still time, but only if you can get to it before the end of the year. Talk to Linda about details and links.
- 3) Gero 101 Interactions. This was a very fun experience and we had some great sessions with the students in this course. This will definitely be on the slate next semester as well, although details again not sorted out as yet. The class size for this course is on the medium-large size (40-50 students) so the bulk of these interactions will continue as Zoom sessions. Do join in if you can.

Last month we had a great interactive session with all of our program staff (Dr. Lopez, Dr. Bukkapatnam, Debbie, and all our nurses—Linda Larsen, Cari, and Rob). There was a good discussion about future activities as the world opens up. One idea I really liked was trying some group activities that didn't center on food. So, we made ornaments this week. That was fun and surprisingly not as messy as feared.



Exercise Reminders *from Linda Paumer*



As you have heard me mention repeatedly, our program is all about choices. We offer a multitude of activities -- physical exercise, mental exercise, nutrition, mindfulness practice, education. student interactions. They are all there for the taking and you are encouraged to join in on the ones that suit you. Included in the choices is the opportunity to do either group or individual exercise.

Currently our gym is open for individual exercise Tu/Th/Fr mornings and we are so blessed to have Mary running herd on those of you that work out then. As things unfold, this open gym time can extend into the afternoon as needed (although finding Mary's clone would be helpful in this regard). "Individual exercise" does imply you are on your own to decide what activities you will do, for how long, how hard, etc. If you are wanting help with determining your program, please speak up.

We started offering group sessions pre-COVID and during the height of the pandemic, these group sessions adapted quite well as Zoom sessions. I personally have had a lot of fun expanding these group offerings but am always open to suggestion regarding changes/additions to the schedule. I am aware group activity is not for everyone, but I thought it worthwhile mentioning some of the benefits:

- Group exercise saves you some thinking about your program -- pick the group for the activity you seek, follow along, and you'll be doing the things needed to benefit you physically
- Exercising with others often helps people stay motivated in their exercise programs.
- People who work out together become role models for each other—reinforcing healthful habits
- Group exercise can be a fun social activity, hence there are benefits beyond those gained from just working out.

Those of you participating in our group sessions know you have gained some of these benefits and I am very grateful that we keep each other going. There is always room for new people in these groups, and you are encouraged to check them out if interested. And joining these groups could mean trying them out in our gym, or joining from home via Zoom. Of course there are other groups out there that might work for you just as well, such as Silver Sneakers groups, Senior Center classes, yoga studios, etc. If you have one you really like, share the sources, please.

I will recap our training goals and hope you are doing you best to meet them, whether you do that on your own or in a group setting: 30-60 minutes of cardiovascular activity 3-5 days/week and doing both some resistance exercise and balance and flexibility activities a few times each week too. Individually or in a group what matters is that you do them!



May your holidays shape up to be the very best!

Santa Hat Brownies

Fun treats are a good way to spread holiday cheer!

Ingredients

- ¾ cup whole-wheat pastry flour (can sub with unbleached all purpose flour)
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- 2 tsp instant coffee granules (optional, but coffee really enhances the chocolate flavor)
- 4 Tbs maple syrup
- 2 tbsp water
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 Tbs flax meal (whisk with 3 tablespoon water)
- ½ cup walnuts (lightly toasted and coarsely chopped)
- hat-shaped strawberries
- toothpicks
- vegan mini marshmallows
- vegan marshmallow fluff (recipe follows or suitable store-bought alternative)



Directions

1. Sift all the dry ingredients, including the flour, coffee, cocoa, baking soda and salt, into a bowl and set aside.
2. In another bowl mix together the maple syrup, water, sugar, flaxmeal mixture, and vanilla extract. Whisk together until well mixed.
3. Add the flour-cocoa mixture to this in 3 batches, mixing well after each addition using a ladle or spatula. Stir in the walnuts. The batter will be really thick.
4. Divide the batter into a mini-muffin pan and fill each all the way to the top. Using a silicone pan or silicone liners allows you to do this grease-free. Oil conventional muffin pan/use paper liners as needed. Fill your muffin tins all the way to the top. Bake the muffins for 5 minutes at 425°F degrees, then for about 25 minutes at 350°F degrees. Stick a toothpick in the center of a muffin to test for doneness. If it comes out clean, the muffins are done. Cool thoroughly on a rack.
5. Make vegan marshmallow fluff Slice the tops off of hat-shaped strawberries. To assemble: attach one mini marshmallow to the top of each strawberry using a toothpick. Then “frost” each brownie with the marshmallow fluff. Gently place the strawberry hats on top and Voila! You’re done!



Another idea: Rudolph Brownie Bites. Yum! Bits of brownie adorned with vegan pretzels and vegan red m&ms.

Adapted from: <http://www.pbandjulie.com/food-1/2018/12/13/santa-hat-brownies-vegan-gluten-free> and <https://holycowvegan.net/fat-free-brownies/>

Vegan Marshmallow Fluff

This ridiculously easy vegan marshmallow fluff can be made with just two ingredients.

Yield 3 cups

Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas or white beans (15oz)
- 1/3 cup sweetener of choice, such as agave, fine sugar, or xylitol for sugar-free
- optional pinch cream of tartar, for stabilization

Directions

Open the can of beans and drain just the watery part into a stand mixer or a large mixing bowl. (Save the actual beans for a different recipe.) You should have about 1/2 cup bean liquid. Add all other ingredients, and beat with an electric mixer or in a stand mixer for 12-16 minutes. It will look thin for quite a while—and you'll probably be cursing—but don't give up hope! It should really began to thicken around minutes 10-11. Cover and refrigerate any leftovers. It separates overnight, but re-beating works perfectly.



<https://chocolatecoveredkatie.com/healthy-vegan-marshmallow-fluff/>

Mulled Hibiscus Punch

Recipe courtesy of Andrea Albin

An infusion made from bright, exotic hibiscus flowers gives this punch a deep red color, and fills your kitchen with a lovely floral scent.

Yield: About 2 quarts

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups dried hibiscus flowers (also called Jamaica)
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon whole allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 cinnamon sticks, plus extra for optional garnish
- 2 whole cloves
- One 2-inch piece orange zest, removed with a vegetable peeler
- Orange slices, for garnish, optional



Directions

Combine the hibiscus flowers, sugar, allspice, peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, cloves and orange zest in a medium pot with 2 quarts water. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Keep at a bare simmer 10 minutes, and then strain. Serve hot, or cool to room temperature over ice, and garnish with a cinnamon stick or orange slice.

Healthy holiday gift ideas

By Debbie Lucus

Looking for ideas for your family and friends that are useful, healthy and fun? Here are a few ideas that are on my list or in my kitchen:

Tofu Press: I cannot live without my tofu press. Most recipes call for pressing the water out of the tofu in order to make it denser. I used to put the tofu on a plate, put another plate on top of the tofu and then put a cast iron skillet on that for about 30 minutes. It was functional, but took some supervision. With a press, it is easier and less messy. I use the Tofuture Tofu Press, but now that I look on Amazon, I see a number of them that are less expensive. Take a look at:

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=tofu+press&ref=nb_sb_noss_1



Lemon squeezer: I use my lemon press almost daily. It is a great way to get all the juice out of your lemon without dealing with pulp and seeds. I can't remember where I got mine, but Amazon has a number of affordable ones. Some have different sizes in one, so that you can switch for limes, too. If you are into these, you can get them for oranges also – of course, I have that one, too!

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=lemon+press+squeezer&crd=1F6T66ELOS4CG&srefix=lemon+pres%2Caps%2C266&ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_3_10

Microplane: Another item I use many days for zesting citrus, grating a garlic clove or ginger. It is easy to use and can be thrown in the dishwasher. I have had mine for years and they seem to be unchanged.

https://www.amazon.com/Microplane-46020-Grater-Made-Cheese-Soft-Handle-Black/dp/B00151WA06/ref=asc_df_B00151WA06/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=167123558869&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=8921014221544684477&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9032458&hvtargid=pla-124851786795&th=1



Immersion Blender: I love my blender 'wand' to puree soup while it is still in the Dutch oven I cooked it in. That really is its only use, but I think it is well worth it. Of course, without one, you could still just pour the soup into a blender – but it is hot and transfer can be messy. Mine is at least 30 years old but I can see from a quick search on Amazon that they have gotten much fancier! Take a look:

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=immersion+blender&i=garden&rh=n%3A1055398%2Cn%3A284507&dc&qid=1638816841&mid=1055398&ref=sr_nr_n_2

Reusable plastic bags: I saw these on a blog recently and love the idea of reducing my plastic consumption. Hopefully I will get some this year and can report back on their usage. Seems they are just like a Ziploc, but made from silicone, washable and dishwasher safe. They also aren't cheap, but imagine not having to purchase plastic bags! Here is a link from Amazon, but I have also seen some sales at Target.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=zip+top&i=kitchen&ref=nb_sb_noss_1



Blender Bombs: I just ordered these for stocking stuffers after reading about them on a blog by Dr. Will Bulsiewicz– the Fiber-Fueled author. Seems they are whole food, plant-based, fiber-filled additions to smoothies or bowls, and could be used as snacks on their own. This is also a woman-owned company and 10% discount available on their website. Thought I'd give them a try. <https://blenderbombs.com/collections/blender-bombs>



Reusable produce bags: I love using these. Generally I try not to use bags at the grocery store, and when I get home, I separate my produce into my reusable bags. You could also take them to the store and just fill up there, if your grocery store allows that. They are washable and keep the produce just as fresh as the plastic bags at the store.



https://www.amazon.com/s?k=reusble+produce+bags&i=kitchen&ref=nb_sb_noss_2



Silicone baking mats: I don't know about you, but my cookie sheets look horrible from years of use. These awesome mats can be used on your sheet pans when roasting veggies, making cookies, etc. It makes clean up quick, things don't stick, protects your sheet pans and saves the use of parchment paper. Mine are just the basic ones from Amazon, but take a look around – there are a lot of choices.

https://www.amazon.com/s?k=silicone+baking+mat&crd=W3NAAG9UCE07&srefix=silicone%2Caps%2C259&ref=nb_sb_ss_ts-doa-p_1_8



Silicone Muffin Pan. Along the same note, is a muffin pan. So easy to bake muffins & cupcakes with no greasing of pan nor fidgeting with paper liners. Baked items pop right out. This one you can buy right off the shelf in Target.

<https://www.target.com/p/12ct-silicone-muffin-pan-made-by-design-8482/-/>

Local produce: You can make people happy with produce from your neighborhood. I may be biased, but I think the Placer County mandarins are the best!! I love to give bags of them as gifts to the those who live far away. Other things can be found at your Farmers' markets that are in season and people would love to receive, such as persimmons, oranges and other citrus, walnuts, etc.

Other gift ideas, depending on your budget, could be appliances such as an Instant Pot, high-speed blender or food processor – all indispensable items in my kitchen. Healthy cookbooks or other health-related books are always welcome. Or try giving a subscription to a food service such as Purple Carrot, Vestro, Green Chef or Imperfect Foods.

You cannot go wrong giving the gift of good health. And don't forget it is okay to get a little something for yourself, too!! Happy Holidays!

Gratitude

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

Just because the Thanksgiving season is over and the ‘Holiday season’ is ramping up, we are not ‘over’ an intention of Gratitude. Why? Because gratitude practices help re-wire our brains to be more positive and resilient – and those are two things we could all use more of right now.



Rick Hanson, Ph.D. has done numerous research studies, revealing gratitude is a positive emotion. He says, “Any positive emotion is an opportunity to enjoy living and to feel satisfied here and now.” Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D. is a Professor of Psychology at the UC Davis and the leading scientific expert on the science of gratitude. He says “The practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person’s life. It can lower blood pressure, improve immune function and facilitate more efficient sleep. Gratitude reduces lifetime risk for depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders, and is a key resiliency factor in the prevention of suicide.” We can all think of reasons to build up our resiliency during the holidays even when there isn’t a global pandemic!

Just knowing that your gratitude mindfulness practice can help you build up your skills of resilience can be a great comfort during times of increased stress like the holidays. It has been said that energy flows where attention goes; so, if you put your attention on gratitude, you may find even more to be grateful for. Practicing gratitude in the moment can shift worry, anxiety and insecurity into ease. As I started to stress about writing this today, I reflected on the room I was in, becoming grateful for mementos of trips, art, and my puppy lying at my feet. You can try this right now, and if you truly slow down and notice your blessings, like me in that moment - you can feel satisfied here and now, this moment.

If you don’t already regularly practice gratitude, here are a couple simple gratitude practice suggestions: Say thank you to every person who does something for you – everyone – even the grocery bagger. Or - Each night when snuggling into bed focus on one thing that went right that day, large or small – there is always *something* to be grateful for. In the spirit of practicing gratitude, I would like to share that I am grateful for the Sac State Cardiovascular Wellness program giving me the opportunity to share the benefits of mindfulness and gratitude.

“I soon discovered that gratitude is a deeper, more complex phenomenon that plays a critical role in human happiness. Gratitude is literally one of the few things that can measurably change peoples’ lives.” -Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/improve-health-practice-gratitude/art-20270841> Tips for more gratitude practices.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/profile/robert_emmons. A profile of Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D. the world’s leading scientific expert on gratitude.

<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/making-gratitude-part-everyday-life-tips-dr-robert-emmons>. Article/videos of Robert Emmons explaining the what, why, and how of gratitude

https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Gratitude-FINAL.pdf 72 pages on the origin, cultural factors, research and benefits of gratitude.