

# Cardiovascular Wellness Program Newsletter

Issue #1

June 2020

## Comments from Linda

If you have been keeping up with the local world, and of course you have, you are aware Sac State will be doing only courses online during the upcoming summer and fall semesters. This has a direct bearing on when the Cardiovascular Wellness Program can resume live sessions in Folsom Hall. Certainly won't happen during June and July; I will let you know about August when I know.

Toward that end, we are continuing with an online program to the best of our abilities. We have a robust calendar in June. You are all encouraged to check in to as many of these classes as interest you. Our mix of exercise, relaxation, and educational options continues, and you are asked to attend the things that speak to you. That is what our program is all about. We will also have one remote "social" each month. We did that May 22<sup>nd</sup> and it was really good to see so many of you. As always, if you want to but are having trouble figuring out how to connect to these online sessions, please reach out and ask for some help.

Knowing many of you will not be checking in via the internet, this newsletter is being assembled to help continue your sense of connection with the Wellness Program. I will include some recipes, some exercise and relaxation tips, and some comments from anyone willing to share things. I hope to do this newsletter at least bimonthly. Hope to see you soon and thinking of you always.

*Linda*

### Included in the 1<sup>st</sup> Issue:

Program Coordinator Notes, Linda Paumer  
Prevention Forward Corner, Javier López, MD  
Nutrition Notes, Debbie Lucus  
Dean Notes, Dianne Hyson  
MD Director Notes, R Bukkapatnam, MD  
Health Record Input, Eliseo Vasquez  
Recipe Corner  
Exercise Reminders  
Universe in a Rose Petal, Linda Larsen, RN-BC  
COVID Coping, Staff Notes

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



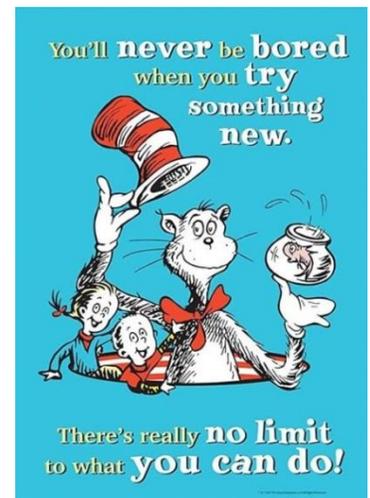
The California Department of Public Health's was awarded a five-year grant in 2018 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to improve the health of Americans. The Cardiology Clinic at UC Davis Health is administering this program, called Prevention Forward, and has partnered with the CWP to provide diabetes, cholesterol, and stroke prevention and management strategies to the community. UCD chose working with CWP because of its deep rooted experience in community-centered approaches focusing on the well-being of individuals. We are exploring how to adopt the use of health information technology, whole-food plant-based eating, regular physical activity, education and community sharing to reverse the course of hypertension and diabetes, precursors of heart disease and stroke. This Prevention Forward program seeks to learn and contribute to ongoing community programs as a way of enhancing the management of these chronic conditions and the wellness of Californians.

## **Back to School** by Debbie Lucas, MS, RD, CDCES

What does Covid 19 have to do with starting college? Well more than you might think. During this unprecedented time (aren't you tired of hearing that?) many of us struggle with food choices and some have put on a few extra pounds. This is not unlike what occurs when teens go off to college and put on the 'Freshmen 15' with their new found freedom. People are calling weight gain during this quarantine time the 'Covid 19'. Fortunately, a recent study found that the actual average weight gain is 8 pounds, not 19 pounds.

If you have been having difficulty in this area, here are a few tips to help through this time:

1. Try tracking what you eat – this is a great way to increase awareness and help you to adjust your intake. You can write it down in a notebook, type it into your iPad, or my personal favorite, use an online phone app such as MyFitnessPal, Lose it or Cronometer. The app will count calories, tell you grams of protein, carbs, fat, etc.. You can scan the bar code of items with a label and the item is put straight into your log. You can track your activity as well. I know the CWP students and interns would be happy to help you with this if you just ask.
2. Follow a plant-based eating style – this isn't the time to stray. We know a whole food, plant-based lifestyle can not only help boost immune system, but its high fiber (fruits, veggies, whole grains and beans) can aid in weight loss.
3. Beware of eating when you aren't hungry – snacking can get out of hand when at home all day, unable to go anywhere. Before you eat anything, ask yourself if you are actually hungry, or if it is 'head hunger'. Sometimes just a pause, distraction or glass of water can keep you out of the frig. Brushing your teeth after a meal can signal that the 'kitchen is closed.' Keep unhealthy foods out of the house (or at least hidden) and healthy foods visible. Have cut up fruits/veggies, hummus, sparkling water, dried fruit, nuts (in small portions) on hand for when you are truly hungry.
4. Try new things to keep you busy – puzzles anyone? Learn a new language – I like the free app, Duolingo, for help in this area. Try gardening, or even just a few herbs planted in jars in your kitchen. Read new books. Call a friend. Start a gratitude journal. Take up knitting or crocheting. Learn to make a quilt with old those old T-shirts you have cleaned out of your drawers. Look at the YouTube clips on the CWP website.
5. Set your intentions to eat like your life depends on it -- How long things are going to be this way is unknown; we might as well make decisions that will enable us to come out the other side better, healthier, stronger than when we started!



And back to where we started, what does this have to do with starting college? Take advantage of all that the CWP has to offer to fill your days – check out the website for exercises classes, health and nutrition talks, stress management tips and fun games and social times. What a great way to stay connected!

There has always been a special spirit about the Cardiovascular Wellness Program. Recent events in our country and our world have helped showcase that spirit that more than ever. From the very beginning, over 5 years ago, when the program was first designated as a “proof of concept pilot”, to three moves later and outlasting many other programs and changes in leadership, we persevered. And now, dozens and dozens of participants and students later, with a pandemic and social movements upon us, we are **still** here. And a big reason for that is the pure heart and commitment of those involved; the volunteers and pro bono hours of people who give their time and energy; the real backbone of the program which is the community of participants; and frankly, a lot of love and care. I was uplifted when I saw all of those faces on my computer screen on a Friday Zoom session. Many faces were familiar ones from over the years. Others were new to me. But all of you helped me feel uplifted. Lately, I have spent long hours planning, reacting, re-imagining schedules, and cancelling plans in my administrative role. On that day, I was reminded that we are a campus. A place of possibility and forward-looking energy. A place that helps shape the future. As always, our time together made me feel better. Like so many, the Cardiovascular Wellness Program helps my heart...in more ways than one. I look forward to supporting our continued time together and our next meeting, Zoom or otherwise.

I think the COVID pandemic took us all by surprise by disrupting our way of life. In trying to take care of patients, preventing heart disease, we forgot that there were much bigger dangers that attacked us, our family, friends, and patients, such as: the fear of infection, fear of dying, social isolation, a lot of fear mongering, and mixed messages about preventing the spread of disease. As a doctor, I have never been afraid of any disease, and for the first time, I was faced with a fear, that my patients may become infected because of me. So we kept as many patients home, or out of the hospital that we could, reassured patients that were fearful or desperately lonely, and "educated" patients that took the hand washing, social distancing and masking lightly. Most importantly, we reached out to family, friends, class mates, and bolstered each others spirits. This has been a great learning experience, and taught me never to take anyone for granted, complain less, and as short as life can be, thank God that we are all doing well.



From Radhika Nandur  
Bukkapatnam, MD,  
Medical Director, CWP



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



# How to measure your blood pressure at home

Follow these steps for an accurate blood pressure reading

## 1 PREPARE

Avoid caffeine, cigarettes and other stimulants 30 minutes before you measure your blood pressure.

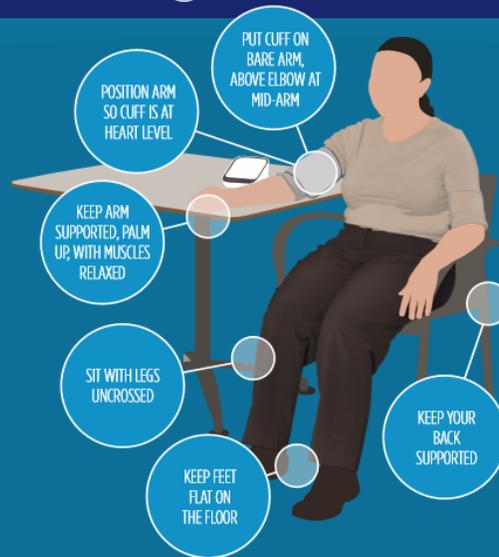
Wait at least 30 minutes after a meal.

If you're on blood pressure medication, measure your BP **before** you take your medication.

Empty your bladder beforehand.

Find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably without distraction.

## 2 POSITION



## 3 MEASURE

Rest for five minutes while in position before starting.

Take two or three measurements, one minute apart.

Keep your body relaxed and in position during measurements.

Sit quietly with no distractions during measurements—avoid conversations, TV, phones and other devices.

Record your measurements when finished.

TARGET:BP™



This Prepare, position, measure handout was adapted with permission of the American Medical Association and The Johns Hopkins University. The original copyrighted content can be found at <https://www.ama-assn.org/ama-johns-hopkins-blood-pressure-resources>.

Three major considerations: Preparing, Position, and Measuring. Achieving accurate and consistent results at home is a key portion of the care that goes beyond regular clinic visits.

- Sit and rest for 5 minutes before taking your first blood pressure (BP) reading.
- Take 3 readings 1 minute apart, all in one sitting.
- Best times to take readings are in the morning before you take your medications and early in the afternoon after lunch (30 minutes after eating).
- Taking your BP at least 3 days a week is recommended. Be sure to talk with your primary care provider on when and how often to take your BP at home.

When recording your at home BP please document the results in an organized fashion. Additionally, document any symptoms and the BP readings that accompany them. Some ideas for documenting include:

- Tried and true pen and paper. Be sure to record the systolic (top number), diastolic (bottom number), and heart rate
- Digital formats like Excel or Google sheets. Many of these are excellent ways to store BP readings and can be easily sent through secured emails to your provider
- Smartphone, (as daunting as they may be). These devices can be synced with some monitors or have apps to store readings

\*A collaboration with UC Davis Health and the California Department of Public Health

*If you would like help setting up smartphone or digital blood pressure journals email Eliseo at*

[\hs-preventionforward@ucdavis.edu](mailto:\hs-preventionforward@ucdavis.edu)

# Barbecue Black Bean Burgers (Vegan)

Makes 12 burgers

## Ingredients

3 cups cooked black beans, (2 cans, rinsed and drained)  
1 ½ cups cooked kidney beans (1 can, rinsed and drained)  
1 cup rolled oats  
1 cup cooked brown rice  
½ cup barbecue sauce  
1 Tbs onion powder  
½ tsp salt



## Directions

Preheat oven to 450 F.  
Smash beans with a fork in a large bowl. Stop when they're halfway between whole beans and refried beans. Add oats, brown rice, barbecue sauce, onion powder and salt. Mix with your hands until evenly combined.  
Form into 12 patties. Let rest in the fridge for 20-30 min (see note). Bake on parchment lined baking sheet for 8-10 min on each side, or until light brown and crispy or grill on flat pan.

*Make-ahead directions: Make uncooked burgers up to 24 hours in advance. Refrigerate until ready to bake, then bake as usual.*

*Make-ahead freezer directions: Double the batch, bake in advance, and freeze the patties in layers separated by wax paper. Warm in the microwave and serve as needed!*

Debbie demonstrated this recipe via Zoom 5/26/20. Recipe by Veggie Quest at <https://www.veggie-quest.com/2017/12/easy-barbecue-black-bean-burgers-vegan-just-0-23-each/>

## Exercise Reminders

Being home & sheltering DOESN'T mean sitting on the couch binging on Netflix. Take advantage of this time—KEEP IN SHAPE. Work in your yard, on your house, strive for maintaining a pattern of being physically active. 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 are doing Zoom sessions with Linda, you possibly are in better shape than you have been in a while. If you aren't with our group, please make sure you are doing things on your own!

The knee cross crunch hits your entire core—the upper, lower, and oblique muscles. The move also requires balance and coordination, effectively working your entire body.



Push ups are an excellent way to strengthen the muscles in your arms, shoulders, and chest. Using the wall instead of the floor makes it easier to lower and lift yourself, allowing you to build muscle strength without the risk of back pain or falling on the floor.

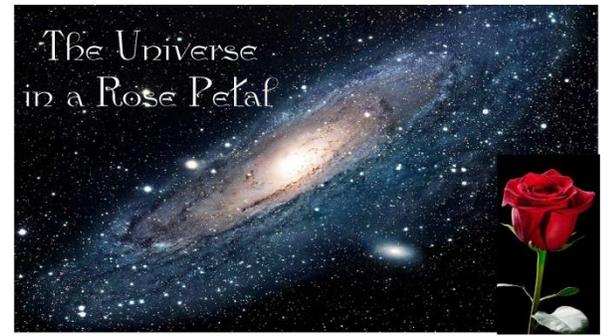


## Mindfulness in Times of a Pandemic

By Linda M, Larsen, RN-BC, RYT

I find myself like the rest of you practicing social distancing and sheltering in place. These are challenging times and I cannot express how grateful I am to have

mindfulness practices to maintain a sense of peace. Please know that I too am experiencing high stress levels—for me, they are at a level compared to my days as an RN in the ICU. My personal yoga and mindful practices evolved out of a need for tools to maintain professionalism and rationality and decrease anxiety throughout stressful situations. As luck would have it, at UC Davis I met our extraordinary Linda Paumer; she encouraged me to teach yoga for Cardiac Rehab and as they say, the rest is history.



I listened in recently on a Tuesday night Zoom meeting. With the difficulties we all are facing now, many are finding increased occurrences of being caught in the fight/flight/freeze stress response—not always with a conscious awareness that this is occurring. Themis Yiaslas, PsyD wisely answered “We need a bridge to respond in the moment. Mindfulness practices, with *regular daily practice* (my emphasis) give us this bridge.”

For years I led UC Davis Cardiac Yoga sessions and now I do the same at Sacramento State. I have always encouraged daily practice for both posture and mindfulness. To further the practices and learnings, I developed a series of handouts based on Jon Kabat-Zinn,s book *Full Catastrophe Living* which is used in his evidence-based 8 week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. Initially MBSR was developed at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center for stress management; it is now used for treating a variety of illnesses such as depression, anxiety, chronic pain, cancer, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, skin and immune disorders. Many of these conditions are also risk factors for heart disease.

I have shared these mindfulness practice handouts with the Cardiovascular Wellness Program website. If you have online access, please check them out, especially numbers one and five which give mindfulness tools for utilizing the breath, one of (if not the most) powerful tool. Number twelve is a “cliffs notes” version to help develop mindfulness as a lifestyle and begin to create that bridge Dr. Yiaslas encourages.

A life lived with more moment to moment mindfulness allows us to see a connection between reality and beauty, inspiration and joy. Being present and calm allows us to stand for who we really are, to respond from a place of our values. For me, mindfulness helps me to remember to respond in difficult circumstances with love, kindness and compassion instead of anger or fear. As Jill Bolte Taylor, Ph.D. states in her book *My Stroke of Insight* –“I may not be in total control of what happens to my life, but I certainly am in charge of how I choose to perceive my experiences.”

## COVID COPING Thought it would be worthwhile sharing how some of us are coping.

Tim: Quarantine has been hard but it is not the worst thing in the world. Changing my perspective and thinking about this as an extended indoor vacation helps. I have been trying many new cooking recipes to keep busy as well as playing video games with some of my friends. Also having friends check in with me has been a big help. Now is a great time to talk to friends and family!

Themis: I am consciously accepting and embracing the hidden blessings and opportunities found in the pandemic lifestyle.

Cari: Exercise has taken on a whole new meaning to help deal with stress, overeating, emotional eating, and boredom. I live in a very hilly area so my husband and I get up early and walk with a neighbor for an hour! Sometimes we will walk for 30 min in the afternoon if it's not too hot. It's a great way to start the day. I have also incorporated some weight training 4 days/week. I'm scared I won't fit into any of my work clothes LOL

Mary: I have been kept busy with planting a small garden and made a small greenhouse. Also while cleaning up my house created so far about 5 storybooks on subjects of dealing with the COVAVIRUS and making up story of the Hare that wants to enter into my greenhouse even thou I have a scarecrow and grandkids art. Had a small drive by for my grandson's 14th birthday. Made signs and I was the only one on the drive by. Ha ha. Yes, attempting to cut my bangs. Yikes! The Zoom Tia chi and stretching sure helps.

Linda Larsen: Yikes! The first week/week and a half was AWFUL. Bob and I weren't sleeping, arguing more than at any time of our 15 year marriage. Talked with my daughter who has a master's in psychology, and she recommended checking out The Gottman Institute. I get podcasts and listened to a few of theirs(they are all only 2-5 minutes) as well as added The Gottman Institute to my Instagram feed. We used the recommendations to have a) "schedule", 2)be intentional, and 3)define rituals.

I start every day with 15-25 minutes meditation, Bob and I do a Qigong practice followed by a PBS's Essentric's practice (we've taped 25) 6 days week/ M-Sat. We have a "love" ritual of 1st in the AM hug, Kiss and hug before lunch, goodnight kiss. Discussed/agreed on what an ideal beginning and ending of each day is (see above for beginning) as well as what time is ideal bedtime. ID's for indicating need to talk/be alone. Identifying personal needs for privacy, space and especially "Rewind" i.e.: Mulligan, do-over, move-on – have been soooo helpful! We made a document of our list of "Be Intentional" and "Redefining Rituals" and printed/put it up front and center on the refrigerator.



It was like night and day! Now we are truly more in love, get along better than ever and other than the external impact of no hair/nails/massage (no massage is killing me)coping quite well!

Linda Paumer: You've figured out what I'm doing. I'm coordinating a Wellness Program, developing remote online concepts. I motivate myself to exercise by getting people to joining me!