Live Lifestyle Medicine

Eugene Plant-Based Providers monthly newsletter

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Photo by Auriana Koutnik

WHO DO YOU TRUST?

Article by Scott Wagnon, PA-C

Who do you trust? That is a thought-provoking question. When it comes to advice about buying a new blender, television, water heater or even a new vehicle there are a lot of sources we can go to. We could get the advice of a trusted friend, work colleague, family member, or someone we bump into at the grocery store, community center or fitness/workout facility. If we end up making a purchase based on poor advice, using somebody's opinion that ended up not being a sound source, the ramifications could mean a financial hit to our wallets but will likely not cause any harm to our physical or even mental health. Essentially, no significant long-term damage is expected.

When it comes to decisions about our lifestyle, which includes what we eat, our sleep, physical activity, stress management, social connections, consumption of alcohol, tobacco, other potentially toxic substances, including supplements and

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Live Lifestyle Medicine is a program supported by the Eugene Plant-Based Providers. To learn more, see: www.livelifestylemedicine.com.

The Joy of Template Recipes

Article by Chef Mark Reinfeld

Understanding the basic formula of a recipe is a crucial skill for any chef, but it is especially important for those who want to create amazing plant-based cuisine. By knowing the basic formula of a recipe, you can create numerous variations with whatever ingredients you have on hand.

One important thing to keep in mind when working with template recipes is to pay attention to the cooking techniques and methods used. Different ingredients require different cooking methods, and understanding these methods can help you create the perfect dish. For example, if you're working with grains, you'll need to know how to cook them properly to achieve the desired texture. Similarly, if you're working with vegetables, you'll need to know how to cook them properly to achieve the desired texture. Some vegetables are best roasted, while others are better sautéed or steamed. Knowing the right cooking method can make all the difference in the final dish.

Another important aspect to consider when working with template recipes is to pay attention to the flavor profile. Different cuisines use different spice blends and flavor combinations, and understanding these can help you create a dish that is both authentic and flavorful. For example, Indian cuisine often uses a blend of spices such as cumin, coriander, turmeric, and garam masala, while Mexican cuisine often incorporates spices like cumin, chili powder, and oregano. By understanding these these flavor profiles, you can create variations of your template recipe that are inspired by different cuisines.

Another tip when working with template recipes is to experiment with different ingredients. You can often substitute one ingredient for another without drastically changing the recipe.

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Photo by Trish Kingsbauer

COTTAGE GROVE HEALTH FAIR

Plant-based providers Debby Coulthard, RN, and Charlie Ross, DO, provided information about the Live Lifestyle Medicine program at the Peace Health Cottage Grove Hospital Health Fair held on September 16, 2025.

LIVE LIFESTYLE MEDICINE HOSTS MONTHLY COMMUNITY WALK

At left, community members stroll with Live Lifestyle Medicine at the South Eugene High School Track on September 27. Live Lifestyle Medicine hosts community walks each month from May through September, along with other community-building activities throughout the year. See our weekly updates for information!

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medications, the ramifications of where we get advice about these things can literally be life and death. Approximately 80% of the death and disability that occur in the United States are a consequence of our poor lifestyle choices – with diet being the number one reason.

In this age of the internet, with social media, blogs, podcasts, websites, articles, television shows, the news, books, etc. there is no shortage of information out there for us to sift through to determine what advice we should follow. Unfortunately, the health industry has turned into a form of entertainment with a profit-making focus. Meaning, much of the time people are selling products or influence. Even on a website or podcast where somebody is not selling any products, they get paid based on how many followers they have, and so the incentive is often creating controversy where there isn't any to create "shock value" so that more people will follow or listen to them.

This brings up two important terms to define. One is "misinformation," which is information that is incorrect or not true, but is shared by the person or entity not knowing that it is incorrect. There is no ill intent, they just did not know any different at the time. The second is "disinformation," which is false, incorrect, or untrue information that is shared or spread with the intent to deceive or influence others. When we come across new information, we may not know which type of information we are receiving, is it good or correct information, misinformation, or disinformation?

It is very common to hear information that is very provocative, and statements are made that there are good evidence-based studies to back it up. Many times, this is correct and valid information, but what kind of studies are they based upon? The general population does not have proper training or education in epidemiology, which is the study of the determinants of health in populations, and the education involves looking at the many different types of research studies that are performed. In Medical School and in Physician Associate school in my case we received a good education in how to evaluate all the different types of studies and levels of evidence that come out. In medicine this is called "evidence-based medicine." Where does that leave the general population? Unfortunately, that leaves many people vulnerable to those who wish to share or spread misinformation and disinformation.

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Defining all the different types of studies that are performed, such as interventional trials, population studies, randomized controlled trials, prospective studies, retrospective studies, meta-analyses with their strengths and weaknesses would put you all to sleep so I will not discuss those here. However, two important basic concepts are vital to understand when evaluating information that says it is backed by good evidence. You need to understand the difference between studies with "soft endpoints" versus "hard endpoints." Soft endpoints are studies usually over a short time, such as 6 months to a year. The results show a change in measurements such as blood pressure, body weight, cholesterol numbers, and blood sugars such as fasting blood sugar and hemoglobin A1c. Hard endpoints on the other hand are studies that are long term, usually over 1-5 years, sometimes even 10 years or longer that look at outcomes such as "all-cause mortality" which means death from any cause, or "cardiovascular mortality," which means death from things such as a heart attack or stroke.

Both soft endpoints and hard endpoints are important types of study results, but they need to be interpreted in context. For example, studies on many people following low carbohydrate/keto diets over a 6- to 12-month time period have shown promising soft endpoint results, such as drops in blood pressure, weight, blood sugar, cholesterol, and many have even gotten off their blood pressure and diabetes medications, but hard endpoint studies have shown that they are more than 30% more likely to die from any cause, and 51% more likely to die from a heart attack or stroke in several 5-year studies. Another one-year study, which looked at blood flow through the heart, showed a decrease in blood flow by 30% for the participants following the low carbohydrate diet, which reinforces the results of the all-cause and cardiovascular mortality results that were found. As you can see here, promising short-term studies with improvement in soft endpoints do not always translate into more important benefits in longer-term studies with hard endpoints.

With all the information discussed to this point, what is one to do? You need to know who you can trust. I became board certified in Lifestyle Medicine through the American College of Lifestyle Medicine. They are an evidence-based source for good nutrition and lifestyle change education and have many resources. You can check them out at the link included in the list below. It is also important to remember that diets such as low carbohydrate/keto, carnivore, using Himalayan salt, kitchen hacks, many supplements and many other quick-fix, too-good-to-be-true claims out there are not supported by the authorities in nutrition and lifestyle, such as the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that certify dietitians, the Harvard School of Public Health, the EAT-Lancet Commission which is a group of 37 scientists from 17 different countries who published nutrition recommendations for not only population health, but also planetary health. A recent review was done of just about all the mainstream diets out there, reviewing diets based upon health and sustainability, including feeding our growing global population and the diets effect on the environment, and ranked at the bottom were both low carb/keto and carnivore diets. The winning diets are the more plant-based or plant-predominant diets. We can also look to large population studies such as the Adventist Health studies and the five so-called "Blue Zones" around the world, which show that the healthiest and longest living populations on the planet eat more plant-predominant diets, and not low carb/keto or carnivore type of diets.

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TEMPLATE RECIPES

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For example, if a recipe calls for tofu, you can often substitute it with tempeh or seitan. Or if a recipe calls for spinach, you can substitute it with kale or collard greens. Experimenting with different ingredients can help you create new variations of your template recipe that are both delicious and unique.

Lastly, when working with template recipes, don't be afraid to make adjustments based on your personal preferences. For example, if you prefer spicy food, you can increase the amount of chili flakes or hot sauce in the recipe. Or if you prefer sweeter flavors, you can add a touch of maple syrup or agave nectar. Making adjustments to the recipe based on your personal preferences can help you create a dish that you truly enjoy.

Photo by Trish Kingsbauer

EXAMPLE "TEMPLATE RECIPE"

CREAMY ASPARAGUS SOUP WITH CORN

Recipe courtesy of Healing the Vegan Way by Chef Mark Reinfeld

The fresh flavors of the veggies blend wonderfully in this nourishing soup with whole corn added at the end for just a bit of crunch. Our friendly cashew gives this soup its creamy richness. Asparagus features the amino acid asparagine, which detoxifies the body as a natural diuretic, especially helpful for hypertension and other heart ailments. Corn rounds out this soup by adding fiber and 10 percent of the daily requirement of folate, thiamine, phosphorus, magnesium and vitamin C. But these ingredients are just one combination possible using the same method! This is a classic template recipe with hundreds of variations possible.

INGREDIENTS

4 1/2 cups water or vegetable stock
1 cup diced yellow onion
3/4 cup thinly sliced celery
5 garlic cloves
3 cups chopped asparagus (1/2-inch pieces)
1/2 cup raw cashew pieces (optionally toasted)
1/2 teaspoon sea salt, or to taste
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen (thawed) corn
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the water or stock in a pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, celery, garlic, and asparagus and cook until the vegetables are just tender, approximately 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Transfer to a blender, add the cashews, salt, black pepper, and crushed red pepper flakes, and blend until creamy. Return to the pot.
3. Add the corn and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the dill and stir well before serving.

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I recommend you check out the resources listed below and also visit the Live Lifestyle Medicine website at livelifestylemedicine.com.

I would also encourage you to attend the free in-person and online classes offered by the Live Lifestyle Medicine group, as well as to attend other free community activities as you navigate the firehose amount of nutrition and lifestyle information/advice that is coming at you daily.

The health, longevity and quality of life for you, your friends, and your family depend on it!

American College of Lifestyle Medicine:
https://www.lifestylemedicine.org

Nutrition Facts Evidence Based Website:
https://www.nutritionfacts.org

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine:
https://www.pcrm.org

Dr. McDougall's Website:
https://www.drmcdougall.com

"The winning diets are the more plant-based or plant-predominant diets."

- Scott Wagnon, PA-C

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Bringing lifestyle medicine to the community, to improve lives, one plant-based kitchen at a time...

www.livelifestylemedicine.com

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