

# Choose Health!

Pitt Partners For Health Lifestyle Medicine Newsletter



## The In-Between

*Before the After and After the Before* by Stefanie Cabaniss

What do you think of when you hear about a health "success story?" Do you envision the before and after picture? Do you see the sad start and the triumphant end? Do you think of your own goals and the obstacles the years in-between have presented?

If you have ever struggled with being overweight, you probably have at least a dozen of those 'before' pics awaiting the ever illusive 'after' pic. If you think about it, the belief remains, that we can start one more time and by a summer event or a child's wedding, we will be the glowing after picture. We still believe we can be successful in losing weight and live the life that is waiting on the other side.

Now, if you are dealing with other chronic health issues such as hypertension, high cholesterol, impending or diagnosed diabetes, the 'after' picture is more times than not, replaced with a resignation of having to live with the condition. There may be sadness around all the foods you cannot have as you work diligently to manage the condition.

● Redefining Health. Let's look at what success actually means and redefine what is possible for your health...even if you are suffering from a chronic health issue. What does health mean to you? This is your call to action, so take a minute to think about what "health" would look like in your life. If you are dealing with a chronic disease, check out all the links in this newsletter and read about the possibilities. Chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease can be prevented, yes - but they can also be reversed! That's fantastic! Read that last sentence again if you need to! If this gets you excited and you are ready to make changes but aren't sure where to start, please contact Brenda Leigh (Director of Lifestyle Medicine at Vidant Health) at 252-343-9221.



*"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."  
- Chinese proverb*

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# 5 TIPS for Success

**What Is Your Why?** Be clear on why you are embarking on a lifestyle change. Is there a health issue you want to improve? Do you want to be more active to play with your children or grandchildren?

Every action begins with a thought and when you have a goal that is meaningful to you then the journey won't be as difficult. Henry Ford said, "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal."

**1.) Set SMART Goals.** These are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Bound Goals. Success is much more likely when you set goals that are SMART.

**Here's an example if you are trying to go plant-based:**

	Turn this into	THIS
Specific	I'm never going to eat meat again	I'm not going to eat meat on Mondays
Measurable	I'm going to eat more fruits and veggies	I'm going to eat 1 fruit and 1 vegetable every day.
Attainable	I'm going to eat kale (and you hate it)	I'll try a smoothie with kale in it and see how it tastes.
Realistic	I won't eat out for lunch anymore	I'm going to prepare and take my lunch to work 3 days this week.

**2.) Time Frame.** Decide when you will start and how long these first goals will be implemented (a week, a month?) Then come up with new goals as you progress.

**3.) Support Your 'Why'.** If you decide to change your lifestyle because you want to lower your cholesterol, learn more about the benefits of Lifestyle Medicine on cholesterol from trustworthy sources. Be inspired by others who have traveled the same journey as you.

**4.) Don't Go It Alone.** Reach out to family or friends who will support you and help keep you accountable. Also, contact Brenda Leigh at the Vidant Wellness Center (at 252-343-9221) for more resources or if you would like to set up an appointment with a Lifestyle Medicine professional.

**5.) Never Give Up.** Not everything you attempt will go as planned, so be flexible and adjust. This is your journey to health and believe it or not, it can be enjoyable and even fun!

**Write down these SMART goals** for you and read it to yourself every morning to help you stay focused. Then, throughout the day, ask yourself if your choices are supporting or hindering your goal.



In the province of the mind, what one believes to be true either is true or becomes true.

According to researchers at Cornell University, we make **226.7** daily decisions on food alone.

## What is Lifestyle Medicine?

Lifestyle Medicine is an evidence-based approach shown to prevent and treat disease. It treats the underlying cause of disease rather than its symptoms that are too often addressed with ever increasing quantities of pills and procedures. Because it treats cause and not just symptoms, only through Lifestyle Medicine can we alter the course of spiraling health care costs.

**Why is this so important?** Chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the U.S. Rates of chronic disease have never been higher, with cost of chronic conditions eating up 86% of all healthcare dollars spent. Chronic disease is so common that more than half of U.S. adults have at least one condition, accounting for 90% of healthcare spending.

According to the World Health Organization, 80% of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes and 40% of cancer could be prevented, primarily with improvements to diet and lifestyle.

The U.S. spends \$3.35 trillion on healthcare a year. This is 18% of our total annual economy. This number will continue to rise if chronic diseases are not controlled through healthy lifestyle changes.

If we don't reverse this trend, we are headed for bankruptcy as a country.

**For more details:** <https://www.slideshare.net/LeslieCasey/lifestyle-medicine-defined>

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# Increase Physical Activity

May is “Exercise Is Medicine Month.”

There are so many health and wellness benefits to staying active and exercising regularly.

Think of ways you can increase activity in your daily routine.



- Reduces Stress and Depression
- Maintains Immune System Function
- Prevents & Treats Over 40 Chronic Diseases
- Reduces Stroke Risk By 34%
- Reduces Type 2 Diabetes Risk By 58%

## Being Active When You Have Depression and Anxiety

Exercise is Medicine | AMERICAN COLLEGE of SPORTS MEDICINE

**Do you want to feel better, move better and sleep better?** Experts now say that any physical activity counts toward better health – even just a few minutes! Studies show that physical activity can reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety as effectively as medication—and without unwanted side effects. Even a little bit of lower-intensity activity can help. Greater amounts of more vigorous exercise have an even bigger effect. Exercise also decreases symptoms of anxiety, both overall and in the moment. Both aerobic activity and strength training can be used to manage depression and anxiety alone or with other treatments like medication and therapy. Talk with your health care provider about what may work best for you.

**Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.**

### Getting Started:

#### Start Small

If you have trouble working up the energy or motivation to exercise, find an activity you'll enjoy and set small, realistic goals. Begin with short periods (like 5, 10 or 15 minutes, or set a goal to walk around the block). Gradually progress.



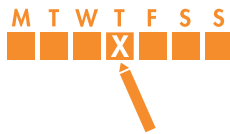
#### Reach out

Being active with others can improve your mood and help you get out of a sad or anxious frame of mind. Join an activity club, sports team or online activity group. Find an activity buddy and meet regularly doing something you both enjoy.



#### Motivation

What will help you stick with an activity plan? Some people find it helpful to schedule activity at a certain time of day. Others give themselves a fitness challenge.



#### Be Active Outside

You'll benefit from being active outdoors or in nature, particularly if you have Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Bundle up in winter to benefit from this natural form of light therapy!



### To stay safe and injury free:

- Start with light to medium effort.
- Gradually increase your pace and time spent being active. Start low and go slow!
- Warm up and cool down (easy pace) before and after exercise

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# Recipe of the Month:

## Mexican 10-Layer Dip

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with this colorful, guilt-free Mexican 10-layer dip, topped with avocado and tofu “sour cream” and served with homemade tortilla chips. Click and visit [www.forksoverknives.com](http://www.forksoverknives.com) for FREE recipes.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 corn tortillas
- ½ (14-ounce) package extra-firm silken tofu, drained
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
- Sea salt
- 1 (15-ounce) can refried black beans (1½ cups)
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 2 scallions (white and green parts), thinly sliced
- 1 tomato, cut into small dice
- ½ cup fresh or frozen (and thawed) corn
- ½ avocado, diced (optional)
- 1 tablespoon seeded and sliced jalapeño (optional)
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro (optional)
- ¼ cup sliced black olives

### DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F. Cut the tortillas into bite-size triangles and bake them on a baking sheet until crisp, 20 minutes.
- Meanwhile, combine the drained tofu, lemon juice, red wine vinegar, and cayenne pepper (if using) in a blender; season with salt to taste. Purée until smooth. Chill the tofu “sour cream” until ready to use.
- Combine the refried beans, garlic powder, cumin, and oregano in a saucepan and cook until heated through, about 5 minutes. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons of water if needed to help combine.
- Spread the beans in the base of a serving dish. Top with the salsa, followed by the lettuce, scallions, tomatoes, corn, and tofu sour cream, along with any optional ingredients. Scatter sliced olives over the dip, then serve with tortilla chips.



# Recipe of the Month:

## Mexican Chocolate Nice Cream

Cocoa powder, cinnamon, and ancho chile powder give a basic banana nice cream the rich, decadent flavor of spiced Mexican hot chocolate. If you don't have ancho chile powder, substitute ¼ to ½ teaspoon finely ground black pepper.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon ancho chile powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 large frozen bananas, broken into pieces (4 cups)
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

### DIRECTIONS:

- In a small bowl combine cocoa powder, ancho chile powder, and cinnamon. Whisk in 1/3 cup boiling water; let cool to room temperature.
- In a high-speed blender or food processor pulse banana pieces on low to medium-low until crumbly, stopping and scraping down sides once or twice. Add cocoa mixture and vanilla; blend continuously 30 seconds to 1 minute or until smooth and creamy, adding 1 to 2 Tbsp. cold water if needed.
- Serve immediately or transfer to a 1-qt. container and store in the freezer up to 1 week.



## Getting the Message Out! More Print Resources:

Share these with your Office or Workplace:

■ [PPH Lifestyle Medicine Tool Kit](#)

■ [Print Resources \(lifestylemedicine.org\)](http://lifestylemedicine.org)