Over the years, recommendations for healthy eating have taken on various shapes, highlighting different foods. Recently, the USDA switched from a Food Guide Pyramid to MyPlate, which is a familiar image of a plate designed to help remind people to make healthy food choices and to put the right foods on their plates.

Different from the Pyramid, MyPlate focuses on proportions of food, rather than the number of servings since portions can vary dramatically from person to person. MyPlate puts emphasis on building a plate based on the major food groups. A large portion of the plate focuses on vegetables. Choosing at least two different types of vegetables, such as greens, carrots, salads and broccoli, is a great way to get natural vitamins and minerals as well as a boost of fiber in your diet. Non-starchy vegetables also contribute only a small amount of calories making them a ...continued on page 14

What do Heinz ketchup, Wishbone ranch dressing, Oscar Meyer pickle and pimento loaf, Claussen relish, Vicks Formula 44 cough syrup and Stove Top stuffing all have in common?

These products, along with many others on supermarket shelves, contain high fructose corn syrup. This sweetener is processed from corn, is sweeter than sucrose (table sugar), and is inexpensive due to food subsidies. Food manufacturers often use it because they can sweeten foods at minimal cost. The United States Department of Agriculture reports that our daily consumption of high fructose corn syrup has increased from two to 165 calories per day over the past 40 years. During this same period our sugar consumption has dropped from 343 to 222 calories. With high fructose corn syrup found in so many foods and very widely consumed, many people wonder if it may affect health more negatively than sucrose. Unfortunately, research findings are not definitive and are quite controversial.

To better understand the differences between sugar and fructose we will begin with an examination of the characteristics of both. Sucrose (table sugar) provides four calories per gram and is a disaccharide composed of glucose and fructose. Most sucrose purchased in our country comes from processing sugar beets or sugar cane. Of all forms of sucrose available, molasses is the least refined form. Fructose also provides four calories per gram but is a monosaccharide. Fructose is found in fruits and fruit juices and can be absorbed directly into the bloodstream during digestion.

High fructose corn syrup is a processed food that is different from fructose and sucrose. To make high fructose corn syrup, food manufacturers process fructose from corn and then blend this with glucose. Generally, most high fructose corn syrup in our country is a blend of 42 percent to 55 percent fructose with glucose. Although sugar and high fructose corn syrup contain both glucose and fructose, they differ in chemical composition. Sucrose is a single molecule with ...continued on page 8
Have you ever given thought to building your strength by using techniques in the water vs. going to the gym and using the machines?

There is a great alternative to “traditional” strength training on machines in the gym. It's called the pool.

As we age, it is a fact we lose muscle. If we do not work those muscles, over time we can lose even more muscle because of lack of activity. For senior adults, one great way to incorporate strength training is to find a pool and start moving. It takes the impact off the joints and provides a great resistive workout.

Water provides 12 times the resistance of air, so no matter what move you do in the water, you will have resistance. To challenge your muscles and your body, simply adding different types of equipment in the water can completely change your workout into a beneficial strength training routine.

Overloading our muscles is one way to see strength gains. Strength gains translate into better balance, better flexibility, stronger muscles to support aching joints and overall better health.

To benefit from strength training in the water, several types of equipment can be used. There are two types of equipment, resistive and buoyant. Resistive equipment, such as mitts, flex paddles and bands, are not working against the water to stay under, but as you perform the exercise you feel the resistance of the equipment as well as the water itself, achieving overload and seeing strength increase.

Buoyant equipment, such as dumbbells, is made of material that floats. You have to work to keep the dumbbells under the water, all while completing the exercise. Both types of equipment are effective, but you must maintain proper form and body position when performing exercises. If you are unable to keep correct form during the exercise, you may want to choose a different type of equipment or simply use your own body for the resistance.
If you are interested in adding strength training in the pool into your routine, there are some things to consider:

**Water depth** – Ideally, you should be in chest deep water. In water that is too deep, you will float too much; in water too shallow and you will not reap the benefits of the water’s resistance.

**Water temperature** – You will sweat while exercising in the water. If water temperature is too hot, you may become dehydrated.

**Body composition** – The more body fat we have, the more we float. You can work against yourself if you don’t choose the appropriate equipment for your body type.

**Strength level** – It’s important to start slow and choose equipment that allows you to maintain good body position and perfect form. If you cannot maintain good form, risk of injury increases.

**Equipment availability** – If you are an individual wishing to purchase your own equipment, it’s good to always seek out a class or instruction in use before you buy to find out what fits your personal needs best.

For strength training in the pool, the number of repetitions for each exercise should be anywhere between eight to 25. The level of intensity in which to perform should be an eight or nine on a scale of 10. You should be putting forth maximal effort to achieve beneficial results. Performing exercises at that intensity until you can no longer perform with good form will give you optimal results over time.

Ways to increase intensity and enhance overloading muscles:

- Adding more acceleration in the water with a particular move
- Change working position
- Assist buoyancy with travel through the water
- Resist buoyancy with traveling through the water
- Go suspended – move to deeper water and attempt certain exercises.

The best way to be introduced to strength training in the water is to find a local pool that offers water exercise classes geared for what you’re looking for. Inquiring about using equipment and finding out the best exercises from a reputable, qualified instructor can help you on your way to improving your overall health by adding this element into your routine.

Always remember, every person’s needs are specific to the individual. What might work for one person doesn’t always work for another based on fitness level, flexibility, body composition and strength. Many factors play a role in finding what works for you as an individual. As with any exercise program, consult with your physician to be sure the activity is appropriate for your needs. Once you’ve got that approval, you can use the swimming pool in more ways than you ever thought possible. §

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**Did you know?**

The Department of Campus Recreation offers the ABLE (A Better Lifestyle Experience) program for older adults. The ABLE program utilizes both land and water exercises five days a week. To get involved contact Tara Josey at 843-349-2815 or tjosey@coastal.edu.
Frederick Keonig, inventor of the fast-printing press, famously noted that “we tend to forget that happiness doesn’t come as a result of getting something we don’t have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.” I sometimes hear my colleagues grumble about how the Grand Strand lacks museums, professional sport teams and other amenities that big cities, which many of them lived in, offer. What these city slickers often overlook are all the unique gems that make the Grand Strand truly one of the grandest places on earth. For this issue of *Prime Time*, instead of writing about the economy (my usual gig), I decided to focus on a more sanguine topic and share a dozen often overlooked or underappreciated places and events that make the Grand Strand a great place to call home.

1. **La Belle Amie Vineyard**
   www.labelleamie.com
   Like most vineyards, La Belle Amie offers an assortment of wines and wine tastings Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., as well as guided tours. But what really makes La Belle Amie (French for beautiful friend) unique are the winter bonfires and the 18 different jazz, blues and rock festivals that the vineyard organizes on its beautiful grounds.

2. **Brookgreen Gardens**
   www.brookgreen.org
   Rarely overlooked but often not fully appreciated, Brookgreen Gardens holds the largest collection of North American sculptures in the world as well as a dazzling array of plants and wildlife. Though breathtaking during the day, the gardens truly come to life during the Cool Summer Nights programming, which includes a variety of musical and theatrical performances. Nights of a Thousand Candles held in December is a must-see holiday event.

3. **Meher Baba Center**
   www.mehercenter.org
   Many locals drive by the entrance to this spiritual center without even realizing that it is there. But behind the understated entrance, located across from Myrtle Beach Mall, lies one of the most enchanting expanses in the Southeast. Dedicated to the Indian spiritual leader Meher Baba, the center is blessed with serene lakes, rarely used trails and a tranquil beach. The center also holds a variety of activities and has cabins for those who wish to stay a while.

4. **The Market Common**
   www.marketcommonmb.com
   Constructed in 2008 at the old Air Force Base, The Market Common is a delightful lifestyle center – a development that combines retail stores with leisure amenities. The adjacent Grand Park includes baseball, football and soccer fields as well as tracks around two lakes. The Market Common organizes a variety of activities such as Oktoberfest, Oyster Roast and Art in the Park.

5. **Local Theaters**
   The Grand Strand theaters may not employ big-name stars on a regular basis, but they have a group of dedicated and talented actors and staff. The list includes Theatre of the Republic in Conway (www.theatreoftherepublic.com), which specializes in...
musicals; Murrells Inlet Community Theater (www.mictheatre.com); and Swamp Fox Players (www.swampfoxplayers.com) in Georgetown. The theaters in Conway and Georgetown also show classic and independent films respectively. There are also wonderful theater productions at Coastal Carolina University (http://www.coastal.edu/culturalarts) in Conway and the Atlantic Stage (www.atlanticstage.com), the Grand Strand's first professional theater in Myrtle Beach.

6. **The Long Bay Symphony**  
   www.longbaysymphony.com  
Despite limited funds, the Long Bay Symphony showcases professional performances every year that frequently include renowned guest musicians. The symphony performs at Myrtle Beach High School.

7. **Festivals**  
There are so many festivals on the Grand Strand during the spring and fall that it is often hard to choose which one to attend. The list includes CanAm Festival, Taste of the Town, Greek Festival, Atalaya Arts & Craft Festival, Little River Shrimp & Jazz Festival, Conway’s Rivertown Jazz and Music Festival and many more. Search for these festivals at www.GrandStrandEvents.com or www.MyrtleBeachOnline.com under *Kicks*.

8. **Conway’s Riverwalk**  
   www.exploreconwaysc.com  
If you want to get away from the traffic and hustle of the beach, then head to the Conway Riverwalk. The walk includes an arboretum, a marina and historical buildings plus wonderful restaurants like Crady’s, Rivertown Bistro and The Trestle nearby.

9. **Downtown Detour**  
You won’t find any skyscrapers in downtown Myrtle Beach, but park your car and start walking on Broadway and Main streets and you will discover ethnic restaurants like Redi-et Ethiopian Cuisine and Bombay at the Beach, as well as unique shops, art galleries and Fresh Brewed–a coffee house with live music. Walk a little longer, and you’ll reach Myrtle Beach’s newly built boardwalk.

10. **Minor League Teams**  
The closest major professional team may be a four-hour drive to Charlotte, but the Grand Strand has minor league teams that are entertaining and a lot less expensive to watch. The Pelicans baseball team (www.myrtlebeachpelicans.com) provides exciting entertainment during the game and between innings. The South Carolina Warriors (www.facebook.com/SouthCarolinaWarriors), our new American Basketball Association team, masterfully dominates their opponents. Rumor has it that Myrtle Beach will soon have a semi-professional soccer team as well.

11. **Sports at the Beach**  
You can do more than watch sports in the Grand Strand – you can participate. There are several superb public sports facilities such as Crabtree, Pepper Geddings and North Myrtle Beach’s Aquatic & Fitness Center. The area also offers recreational baseball, soccer and football leagues and an assortment of sports clubs such as the Grand Strand Running Club, Coastal Ski Club and even a Dragon Boat club.

12. **State Parks**  
Myrtle Beach and Huntington Beach State Parks are known for their attractive, quiet beaches. But both parks also have hiking trails, camping grounds and wetlands teeming with wildlife.

   Fourteen million visitors make the Grand Strand the second-highest visited beach resort in North America after Atlantic City. Widely known destinations like Daytona Beach (8 million visitors), Cancun (6 million) or even Miami Beach (12 million) don’t get as many visitors. There are numerous beaches along the East Coast, and there are many reasons why millions of people are attracted to our neck of the woods. Locals also appreciate just how grand the Grand Strand really is. §

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The Better Business Bureau of Coastal Carolina would like to warn consumers of potential door-to-door scams that make their way back into the area periodically.

A classic scam is the door-to-door magazine sales. Typically, young men or women (ranging from late teens to early twenties) will come to your door, giving a sales pitch that may have to do with raising money for a trip overseas for their school. They may also say they are raising money for their high school or college, or they are raising money to go to college. Who wants to deny a young person their dream of college? These salespeople may even have laminated ID badges to show you, along with a sad story. They might also tell you they are being judged on how well they do with their presentation. Finally, the catch will come…you have to purchase something, which is usually a magazine subscription. Sadly, most consumers that end up giving their money away for those subscriptions will never receive a magazine or see their money again.

Other door-to-door scams might include salespeople claiming to be from an alarm company, cable or telephone company, roofing repair, driveway paving or home improvement.

Tips to avoid the door-to-door scam:

- Don’t let them in your house.
  While there are legitimate salespeople that still make door-to-door visits, consumers should be very cautious and not allow any unexpected guests into their home. If someone comes to your door who you do not know, you should ask who it is through a closed door. If it’s a solicitor and you don’t want to talk to them, simply tell them to leave. If you do open the door, don’t open it wide and don’t invite them in. They may say things like: “Can I use your phone to contact my sales manager?”, “Can I get a glass of water?”, “Can I use your bathroom?” or “It’s really hot out here, can we go inside and talk where it’s cool?” If you tell them “no” and they still won’t leave you alone, one suggestion is to yell “fire” or anything to get other people’s attention. If you feel you are in danger, you should immediately call the police.

- Pay attention and listen carefully to what they say.
  If you think that the salesperson may be lying, ask for the name of their school, company or association they are representing, along with their contact information. Verify that this salesperson is actually associated with the group, and then verify that the company is legitimate by checking with the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org or by contacting S.C. Consumer Protection at www.sconsumer.gov or N.C. Consumer Protection at http://www.ncdoj.gov/consumer.aspx.

- Ask the salesperson to give you everything in writing, including return or warranty information.
  Tell them that you’d like to verify everything first, then get back to them. If you don’t feel comfortable or see a neighbor being harassed by a salesperson, call the police.

- Don’t be pressured into anything.
  Salespeople will try using high pressure sales techniques to get you to buy their product. Hold your position, and don’t allow them to win you over with words like “this offer is only valid for today,” or “I won’t be in this area again.” A door-to-door salesperson will try to keep you talking so long that you’ll finally wear down and say “yes.” They hope that you will just “give in” to get rid of them. The Federal Trade Commission’s Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule gives the customer three days to
cancel purchases over $25 that are made in their home or at a location that is not the seller’s permanent place of business. Along with a receipt, salespeople should also include a completed cancellation form that customers can send to the company to cancel the agreement. By law, the company must give customers a refund within 10 days of receiving the cancellation notice.

What to do if you have already been scammed:

- If you happen to have the company’s address and telephone number, you should try contacting them first to cancel the subscription or services that you agreed to, and ask for a refund.

- If you paid cash for one of these door-to-door scams, there isn’t much that can be done to retrieve your money since there is no way to trace it. If you paid by check, you can try contacting your bank and cancelling the check. You should also warn the bank that a potential scammer has your check, and you might want to change the account number.

- If you paid by credit or debit card, contact the bank or credit card issuer immediately. Explain to them what happened, and you might have to cancel the card. You may also want to continue to monitor charges to your card so you can dispute any purchases you did not make.

- If the company continues to contact you and demand payment after you’ve cancelled, send them copies of the cancellation letter along with a cease-and-desist letter. You may have to contact an attorney, and threaten them with legal action if they continue to harass you by saying they will report you to a credit bureau.

You can file a complaint with the BBB by visiting our website at www.bbb.org.

Kathy Graham, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau, Coastal Carolina, Inc., can be reached at 843-488-0238, by fax 843-488-0998 or email at kathygraham@sc.rr.com.

PrimeTimes readers often call or email with questions about websites that deal with specific issues, ie., health, finance, retirement, etc. Readers will also suggest websites they’ve found useful and informative. The following are some websites, mostly about heart and health, that readers have recommended:

http://mylifecheck.heart.org
An American Heart Association-sponsored website geared to helping people set up a plan to achieve targets on seven different risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

http://www.cardiosmart.org
An educational site for patients sponsored by the American College of Cardiology.

http://www.womenheart.org
An educational and support group website focusing on prevention and treatment of women affected by heart disease.

http://www.hearthealthywomen.org
This site offers a variety of reading about heart issues.

http://my.clevelandclinic.org/heart411book
Heart 411 is the definitive guide to heart health written by two of America’s most respected doctors at Cleveland Clinic.

http://www.reynoldsriskscore.org
Reynolds Risk Score is designed to predict your risk of having a future heart attack, stroke, etc.

http://www.realage.com
Deals with a wide range of heart issues.

http://www.aging society.org
A website that PrimeTimes receives, and readers may find of interest is from the “National Academy on an Aging Society.” The publication/newsletter covers a broad area including health and government policy.

PrimeTimes offers these websites as information only, and readers can decide for themselves whether they are of use.
fructose and glucose coupled. In high fructose corn syrup, the fructose and glucose are separate molecules. Because there are twice as many molecules in high fructose corn syrup as compared to the same percent solution of sucrose, more molecules are triggering the sweet receptors on the tongue. As a result of the manufacturing process for high-fructose corn syrup, the fructose molecules in the sweetener are free and unbound, ready for absorption and utilization. In contrast, every fructose molecule in sucrose (from cane or beet sugar) is bound to a corresponding glucose molecule and must go through an extra metabolic step before it can be utilized.

Because sugar and high fructose corn syrup differ in their chemical composition, some experts believe there may be differences in the ways these foods affect calorie intake and weight gain. Some researchers have reported that high intake of fructose, particularly from sweetened liquids, may increase calorie intake and obesity through the blunting of hormones responsible for satiety. These blunted responses may not lead to feelings of fullness and result in consuming increasing calories.

Although nutrition research involving animals does not necessarily translate to the same health effects on humans, several studies have found negative metabolic effects when rodents consume high amounts of high fructose corn syrup. For example, a recent study in Pharmacology, Biochemistry and Behavior from Princeton University revealed high-fructose corn syrup caused much more weight gain than sucrose in laboratory rats. The researchers performed two separate experiments using high fructose corn syrup and sucrose water. In the first experiment, the rats given water sweetened with high fructose corn syrup in addition to their rat chow gained significantly more weight than those who received sucrose water along with their chow. In their second experiment, researchers examined the long-term health consequences for rats with access to chow and high fructose corn syrup. These rodents had changes similar to those experienced by humans when they develop metabolic syndrome: abnormal weight gain, increases in triglycerides, and more belly fat. Those with access to high fructose corn syrup also gained 48 percent more weight than those rodents fed a normal diet.

Most human studies are small in number and examine the effect of fructose rather than directly comparing the health consequences of sucrose versus high fructose corn syrup consumption. For example, Fach and colleagues reported six days of high-fructose overfeeding in healthy, young male volunteers led to a substantial increase in plasma triglycerides. Furthermore, Hallfrisch and others conducted a crossover study where they fed 12 hyperinsulinemic men and 12 male controls diets with three varying levels of fructose for five weeks each. To keep caloric intake the same, starch calories were increased when fructose levels were lower. Among these men, total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol were significantly greater at the higher fructose levels.

Those researchers who believe there are no differences between sucrose and high fructose corn syrup in promoting weight gain insist that focusing on fructose as a major reason for our increases in weight just distracts us from further investigation of other causes of obesity. We know obesity is a complex problem that cannot be blamed on one nutrition behavior. There is, however, one item that most nutrition researchers do agree on, and that is the need to examine the metabolic consequences of high fructose corn syrup as compared to sucrose at normal population levels in randomized prospective trials.

Daily, Americans consume 44 more calories per person from sweeteners (from both sucrose and high fructose corn syrup) than we did 40 years ago. This caloric increase, if not adjusted with additional physical activity, could contribute to a four to five pound yearly weight gain or an even more startling 40 to 50 extra pounds in a decade. Epidemiological studies show growing evidence that consumption of any type of sweetened beverages is associated with a high-energy intake, increased body weight, and the occurrence of metabolic and cardiovascular disorders. Limiting use of caloric sweeteners or the consumption of processed foods that contain them is an important lifestyle change to maintain a healthy body weight and improve health.  

Sharon Thompson can be reached at thompson@coastal.edu.
For those of us who loved going to amusement parks when we were kids, we will probably never be too old! If you’re not sure if you would still enjoy a trip down memory lane, let me help you out. Taking my grandchildren to Carowinds recently brought me back into the real world real quick.

My first clue should have been when they gave me the senior citizen discount without checking my ID. I didn’t know whether to be glad or mad! Anyway, we headed to get a soda before we started this adventure. Thirty dollars later (there should be a law against $5 sodas), we are heading toward the Carolina Cobra (rollercoaster) for our first ride. My second clue should have been when I noticed that there were no other adults in line except me. But, being the trouper that I am… I put my big girl panties on and rode the Cobra. When the ride f-i-n-a-l-l-y ended, I noticed that while being upside down, my sunglasses and my hat had fallen off and my fanny pack was around my neck. I was not a pretty sight. I know this because my grandson told me so!

I talked the kids into riding the next one without me because I had to hunt the nearest restroom and find out where the blood pressure machines were located. The little girl at the Customer Service Desk was quick to inform me that they did not have any blood pressure machines. (I couldn’t believe it.) I also asked for a map so I would know where all the restrooms were located (just in case I needed to find one quick).

I found the kids and tried to steer them toward the Bumper Cars, but they wouldn’t have it. Nope… our next ride would be the White Water Falls. It had “roller coaster” written all over it; just a smaller version… with water. We hopped on and took off. After about 3 minutes, we stopped and I got off (they stayed on for another go-round). Good thing I knew where the closest restroom was so I could dry my clothes (and hair). A wet T-shirt just isn’t very becoming at my age.

I told the kids that I would meet up with them in about 30 minutes. That would give me time to check out the gift shops and cool off. FYI… this is where the air conditioning is if you ever need to know. Two hours later, after walking around in circles, I found the kids. That map I had left a lot to be desired… or it could have been because it was written for people with 20/20 vision; who knows? All I know is that other than finding the restrooms, I was lost.

Everybody is hungry, so we head for the snack bar. I try to prepare myself to pay out another huge amount for our lunch. We ordered three cheeseburgers, three fries, two onion rings, two corndogs, two funnel cakes, one hotdog, and five sodas for a whopping $96! Nothing would have prepared me for that! The food was pretty good though (as long as I didn’t let myself think about how much it cost). It didn’t seem to bother anybody else.

After we ate, the kids tried to talk me into riding another one of the roller coasters but I begged off. Mind you, they didn’t try real hard. By this time, my feet were hurting, my back was hurting, my neck was hurting, and I was sunburned. I decided just to sit down on a bench and “people watch.” I saw fat people, skinny people, short people, tall people, young and old people walking around enjoying themselves. People watching is great! I’m having a blast!

And it came to me… I realized that you are never too old to enjoy an amusement park.  

Vicki Williams can be reached at 843-349-2912 or Vicki@coastal.edu.
My grandfather is somebody I will never stop learning from, and what I learn from him, I will never forget. His name is Charles E. Sams Sr., otherwise known as Charlie. I call him Poppy. He’s taught me that it’s best not to always worry, that popcorn tastes best when popped on the stove, and that manners can get you far in life. I’ve also learned how to get through tough spots in life by his example.

On Dec. 21, 2002, I was lying on the back seat of my mother’s car, and my parents and I were speeding to MUSC in Charleston, S.C. Poppy had received a telephone call that would change his life forever. He was going to receive a new heart. Bypass heart surgery and heart attacks had brought him to this point. I was scared, but I never saw that same fear in him. We arrived and I went into the waiting room to say goodbye to him. He didn’t cry, but instead gave me a hug and said, “I love you.” His inner strength blew me away as I gave his hand a squeeze and walked away.

Roughly 12 hours later, my family and I were gathered around his hospital bed, watching Poppy sleep as a machine steadily kept his heart rate monitored. Various tubes stuck out of his body. However, by morning he was chatting nurses’ ears off and couldn’t stop smiling. He had made it through the transplant, and it was going to get better from there.

Five years later, my Poppy’s new heart would be broken. On a June night, my mom, Poppy and I were huddled together on his couch. A tissue box lay on the coffee table in front of us and nobody had a dry eye.

At 10 o’clock in the morning and we left Carolina Pines Hospital. My Granny had just passed away from cancer. I always knew my Poppy was strong, but that night he let go. I wanted to be able to take away all his pain, and I wanted for us to be sitting there with Granny, talking and laughing about a show on television. Instead, we were empty. I cuddled up next to him, and we held each other as we cried and mourned together. Our lives would never be the same, but we both knew we would grow even closer as grandfather and granddaughter.

Today, Poppy is taking advantage of his young heart. Time has healed a little and he is back on the dating scene. The only problem is, he subtracts the age of his heart from his real age and believes that is the age of the women he should be dating. This can sometimes be a problem, but in reality, it’s okay for him to act young. He’s 69 years old, and I believe he should act as old (or as young) as he wants. We text each other and watch horror movies. Getting older only means you gain more experience and knowledge.

Poppy is always telling me, “I just taught you everything I know.” I know that’s far from true. Poppy has much to offer to anybody who will listen. He’s not afraid to live life to its fullest, even when he was knocking at death’s door. Age and circumstance has never, and will never, hold him back. I certainly hope to always have the same outlook on life. §
In today’s economy, we have become very concerned about the cost of food. But what we should be focusing on is the price we pay with our health. We, as a society, demand less expensive food, and we get what we pay for. With the poor quality of food that meets our current demands, it is no wonder that obesity, diabetes, inflammatory diseases, and a myriad of psychological disorders are rampant in our society today. Over the last several months, I have made changes to my diet that have resulted in drastic improvements in my overall health. I would like to share my experience so that I might help readers gain an interest in their own well-being and improve the quality of their lives.

Back in October 2011, my family and I were just like most American families. We constantly worried about cold and flu season, struggled with our weight, and suffered with anxiety and seasonal depression. My dad had been diagnosed with Type-2 Diabetes 15 years ago and had recently been experiencing chronic back pain. My mom battled with arthritis and an inflammatory skin condition called Rosacea. Being a full-time student and mother, I seemed to always be fighting off some sort of illness. My family needed a change.

I became frustrated one day when I was coming down with another cold. I couldn’t afford to miss more school. I had a feeling that my getting sick all the time was more than just bad luck, so I went to the bookstore and headed straight toward the diet and health section. I came across a book called “Clean: The Revolutionary Program to Restore the Body’s Natural Ability to Heal Itself,” by Alejandro Junger, MD. It talks about the foods and substances that lead to the bulk of today’s common ailments, and how to eliminate these potential toxins from our bodies. After reading the book, I got all of my questions answered. I became extremely passionate about nutrition. I did more research and discussed all that I had learned with my peers and professors who were knowledgeable on the subject. Finally, it was time for me to implement what I’d learned. I decided I would change my diet and report about it in a blog. When I told my parents what I was planning to do, they became enthusiastic about the idea and jumped on board.

My family and I began our life change by completing a three-week detoxification. We eliminated many common foods from our diets. We cut out dairy, because it has actually been found to increase acidity in the body, which leaches calcium from bones. We stopped eating gluten, because it is a common allergen, and can lead to inflammatory problems. And we removed sugar, because it is linked to mood disorders such as depression, as well as inflammatory responses due to increased insulin. For obvious reasons, we also excluded toxins and psychoactive substances from our diet such as caffeine, alcohol, trans fats, pesticide-laden produce and artificial sweeteners. Our diets consisted of whole or blended organic fruits, organic vegetables, hormone-free chicken, wild caught fish, nuts, seeds, legumes, gluten-free grains and cold-pressed oils. Our diet was rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, which are known to facilitate brain and heart health. It was somewhat difficult at first to adjust to this new way of eating, but it didn’t take long before we felt like pros. My family worked together to create delicious, healthy meals every day, and our palates never became bored. Over the course of three weeks, we noticed some surprising changes.

Within the first week, my cravings for carbohydrates, sugar and caffeine completely disappeared. My chronic sniffles and sore throat, which I had previously attributed to “cold and flu season,” had gone away as well. My daily fatigue lifted, and I was able to get through each day without feeling like I needed a nap. I finally felt freed from the control that food once had over me.

During week two, I began to see the most drastic changes. My energy levels had increased so much, that I was borderline euphoric. I no longer felt anxious, stressed out, and overwhelmed by my responsibilities. Getting my homework done felt like a breeze. I felt clear-headed and I slept better than ever. I woke up each morning feeling energized, and I never had to...
The volatility experienced in investment markets during the past several years has tested the stamina of many retired investors. One week the markets appear to be charging ahead in full recovery mode only to be followed by a period of major losses. I frequently hear retirees say they no longer can cope with the ups and downs of the markets, punctuated by scary media stories about impending economic collapses and bailouts for this or that company or country. In some cases these retirees have opted instead to hold their retirement savings in low-return cash equivalents or put them into annuities, which will guarantee them a fixed income for the next 10 to 15 years or even for life. While a fixed annuity may be fine for some portion of a retiree’s investment portfolio (depending on the retiree’s circumstances and the costs associated with the annuity), what these investors often fail to thoroughly assess is the impact that inflation will have on their assets and the deterioration in real purchasing power that the fixed income will undergo over time. For example, someone who is adequately able to support themselves on $50,000 per year today will require $77,898 to support the same lifestyle in 15 years at just a modest three percent inflation rate. Many economists predict inflation will be much higher than that unless we can get government deficits under control. Furthermore, uncertainty-sparked volatility in investment markets is also likely to continue in the foreseeable future. What alternative, then, does a retiree have to keep income growing with inflation?

The best option that most retirees have for coping with inflation is through ownership of real assets such as stocks and bonds from companies producing an increasing stream of value. While that ownership is not without risk, the risk can be minimized and managed through the implementation of a well diversified investment plan with active concentration on asset allocation. The asset allocation plan should take into consideration a person’s circumstances, i.e. the savings available and how much income may be needed both in the present and in the future, as well as the specific objectives that the investor has along with tolerance for risk. Once the plan has been developed, it should be implemented and monitored on a regular basis. The high volatility in the current markets may call for frequent rebalancing in order to maintain asset allocation percentages. Some mutual fund companies offer “allocation funds” that provide income and a diversified and balanced allocation that adjusts based on an investor’s age, economic conditions and objectives.

For a person structuring the entire investment plan themselves, the stock portion of the portfolio should consist of a diversified mix of both large and small company stocks. For most people these would be held in the form of mutual funds. For retirees seeking income, I would suggest considering high dividend index funds, including Exchange Traded Funds. These generally provide low administrative costs and good
tax efficiency. The bond portion of the portfolio may consist of a combination of U.S. Treasuries (in this case I would suggest considering TIPS or Treasury Inflation Protected Securities), along with high quality corporate bonds. Both can be purchased in the form of mutual funds, including Exchange Traded Funds. Depending on an individual’s tax bracket, municipal bonds or bond funds may also be an attractive alternative in taxable accounts. For most retirees, bonds or bond funds rated as investment grade (BBB or better) should comprise the major portion of the bond portfolio and in an inflationary period maturities of individual bonds should be “laddered” or staggered to mature at regular short and mid-term intervals. Bonds are designed to balance stocks in the portfolio and in most cases when one goes down the other goes up (or at least doesn’t go up or down as much) and this tends to provide a more stable overall portfolio.

Yes, investing is risky…but not investing is risky as well. Managing that risk at acceptable levels is the challenge faced by retirees. Developing a diversified portfolio of stocks balanced by bonds along with sufficient cash to cover near-term needs is the first step. That first step needs to be followed by frequent review and rebalancing of the portfolio mix in the light of portfolio performance and the economic outlook. In that way risk can be managed to counter the ravages of inflation and help ensure that the retirement nest egg provides maximum benefit throughout the retirement years. §

Norm Whiteley publishes a free monthly online investment newsletter and teaches classes for the Coastal Carolina University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He is a past president of Lifelong Learning. Norm started a new website for the OLLI Investor Education Club dealing with investing questions or expertise sharing at www.groups.google.com/group/investment-fundamentals. He can be reached at nwhiteley@coastal.edu or nwhiteley@verizon.net.

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Health Psychology and Nutrition: The Real Cost of Food

hit “snooze.” And at the end of each day, I always had enough energy to play with my daughter.

During the third week, my parents noticed similar changes, although their transformations took longer to occur. Both of my parents, who used to feel somewhat foggy, reported better short-term memory and faster recall speed. Their work performance improved because of increased concentration and less anxiety. My mother’s mood had lifted, and she found a renewed passion for her work. Her Rosacea had disappeared, leaving her skin healthy and glowing. My father’s back pain had gone away, and his glucose levels had dramatically decreased. The redness in his eyes, which had been brought about by inflammation due to his diabetes, cleared up, leaving them bright white and stunningly blue. Some of the additional changes I experienced were unexpected. I noticed that my hair stopped coming out in big clumps in the shower, bruises that used to appear out of nowhere vanished from my legs, and the dark circles under my eyes diminished. I couldn’t believe the changes I was seeing in such a short amount of time.

After three weeks, we began to reintroduce foods that had once been a regular part of our diets. We were supposed to try one food at a time to find out which foods our bodies might be sensitive to. We each decided to try our favorite food. My mom tried cheese, my dad tried sugar-free candy, and the first thing I ate was wheat bread. The next day, my mom had an outbreak of Rosacea, my dad’s back pain came back, and I felt sluggish and tired. I used to feel like that every day, and I had no idea that was a result of the food I had been eating.

Many of us don’t realize that the food we eat on a daily basis can cause us suffering. But the reverse is also true; the food you eat (or don’t eat) can restore you to health. This doesn’t mean we can’t occasionally eat junk food. We just need to be aware of how these foods affect us physiologically and psychologically, and keep them at a minimum. We can also demand better quality products by paying the extra cost for healthful foods. By changing the way we eat, we can save money on health care costs, take fewer trips to the doctor, miss fewer days of work, and live longer, healthier lives. §
smart choice for people watching their weight. Aim for fresh or frozen vegetables prepared with minimal fat in order to achieve the biggest health benefits from this food group. Fruits include any fresh, frozen or canned fruit as well as 100 percent fruit juice. Like with vegetables, fresh or frozen fruits are great choices, or choose fruits canned in their natural juices rather than heavy syrups to avoid consuming empty calories. A combination of fruits and vegetables should make up half of your plate when using the MyPlate guide.

The remaining quarters of the plate should be made up of grains and proteins. At least half of the grains you choose should be whole grains, such as brown rice, whole wheat pasta, whole grain bread, bran and quinoa. Choose lean proteins, such as skinless chicken breast, lean ground beef, eggs, fish and pork chops with visible fat removed to fill up the remaining quarter of your plate. Meats and proteins should also be prepared without added fat, such as by grilling, baking or broiling, to achieve the highest health benefits. Vegetable-based proteins that also fit into this category include tofu, beans, legumes, and nuts and seeds. Lastly, a serving of calcium-rich dairy rounds out the plate. Foods and beverages such as low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt, and low-fat cheeses help meet this requirement.

Individuals can customize their plates based on their gender, age, height, weight and physical activity level by using the MyPlate tool provided by the USDA on its website at www.choosemyplate.gov. Choosing a variety of foods to include in your meals can help you obtain your daily recommended nutritional requirements as well as provide a well-balanced diet. §

Larissa Gedney can be reached at Conway Medical Center at 843-347-8241.
Georgetown Hospital System’s Customer Service program has been developed around the premise, “Family Caring for Family.” I like the image that this idea creates. Thinking about my own recent hospitalization at Georgetown Memorial Hospital, I recall that the medical professionals, the kitchen staff, housekeeping and, well, everyone on staff, worked together, as a team to solve my health issue and make me comfortable during my stay. Leaving the hospital, I was a satisfied customer.

When I returned home, the theme of “family caring for family” continued. My husband, bless his heart, picked me up to bring me home. He stopped to get my medicines, he made sure that there were groceries in the house, he propped me up and brought me water, when I first came home. As time went on, he checked on my condition periodically. He accompanied me to my first follow-up appointment to see a specialist. My husband supported me and showed concern and compassion for me as I healed. Family caring for family. How blessed am I? I enjoyed good care in the hospital, and good care at home. This combination gave me a good result. I got better!

But what happens if you have no family waiting for you to take you home? What if your family members live far away? What if your family caregiver is ill himself? What if you have no ride home from the hospital? How will you get your medicines? How will you get to your follow-up medical appointments? What if there is no one to check on your progress as you heal?

These are problems that are faced everyday by some of our fellow citizens. Sometimes, just because of these concerns, folks return needlessly to the hospital only to experience the whole cycle of hospitalization once more, and go home, yet again, without family care! For some, it can be a maddening whorl.

The Waccamaw Area Agency on Aging, in partnership with Georgetown Hospital System and other community service agencies and businesses, is working to develop a solution to the cycle of repeated hospitalizations that are affecting up to one-third of the hospital’s patients over the age of 65. The Georgetown Hospital System and Waccamaw Area Agency on Aging are teaming up to make plans to thoroughly train some special volunteers, Health Coaches, to act as surrogate family members for some patients who are in danger of repeated hospitalizations.

Health Coaches would undergo extensive training to prepare them to perform a variety of tasks: build a friendly relationship with a patient that may need help after discharge, if necessary, take him/her home, offer assistance in obtaining medicines and/or food, get them comfortable at home, discuss discharge instructions, make sure that folks get to their follow-up visits, call daily to check on them. In short, Health Coach Volunteers will agree to act as if they were a family caregiver for patients as they mend and heal. Health Coaches will show patients that someone cares about their progress in healing, reassuring them and adding to their comfort level.

This new demonstration program is called Care Transitions. The hope is that the program will start small and grow, and make a positive difference in helping people to heal. §

For information about becoming a volunteer Care Transitions Health Coach, please call or email one of the following contacts.

Danita Vetter, Area Agency on Aging, 843-436-6123 or dvetter@wrcog.org
Deb Collins, 843-652-1624, dcollins@georgetownhospitalsystem.org
Crystal Reid at 520-8548, creid@georgetownhospitalsystem.org
PrimeTimes recognizes that there’s always room for a smile—occasionally even a laugh out loud—among the serious topics we address. If you have a humorous story about the lighter side of aging, send it in and we may publish it in a future issue of the newsletter.

There was a scientist (from CCU’s College of Science) who had an exceptional gift for fixing all things mechanical or lab-oriented. He had been a consultant for many years and had been especially involved with a particular company. The scientist had become dedicated to being retired.

The company he had worked with so many times over the years contacted him regarding a seemingly impossible problem they were having with one of their multimillion dollar machines. They had tried everything and everyone else to get the machine to work but to no avail. The scientist reluctantly took the challenge. He spent the day studying the huge machine. At the end of the day he marked a small “x” in chalk on a particular component of the machine and stated, “This is where your problem is.” The part was replaced, and the machine worked perfectly again.

The company received an invoice for $50,000 from the scientist for his service and the company demanded an itemized accounting of his charges. The scientist obliged, responding briefly: “One chalk mark $1. Knowing where to put it $49,999.”