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For many cruise passengers, the big draw for choosing one particular sailing over all others is the quality of the itinerary — the ports you will be visiting, the special activities and excursions planned on shore, and the time you will spend soaking up local cultures (and snapping up bargains in the shops in port!).

At the end of each day, though, you still want to come “home” to a comfortable cabin. What can you do if you have questions or concerns about your cruise cabin during the trip? Sometimes, on very rare occasions, your cruise line will assign you (before you have boarded the ship, or after the cruise has begun) a different cabin than you reserved. If your new cabin is a better choice in a higher category, then you actually benefit from the move.

However, if you have been switched to a smaller or less desirable cabin, then the cruise line should refund to you the difference in price between your original cabin and the one you have been given. If the new cabin is in the same price range and category as your original cabin, you will have a tougher argument unless the new location brings its own set of problems (for example, it sits

next to a noisy engine room). In this case, you should let the ship’s purser or your cabin steward know immediately that you are unhappy and that you wish to be reassigned to a better cabin or given a partial refund. (You should definitely complain about this situation while you are aboard the ship, instead of waiting until the cruise has ended, as you will have a stronger claim against the cruise line at that point.) Once in a while, cruise passengers are surprised at the small size of ship cabins compared to standard hotel rooms. Unless your cabin is literally smaller in size than the dimensions promised in the cruise brochure, you have no reasonable legal grounds for complaining. However, if conditions inside the cabin are unsafe or uncomfortable (such as a broken window or air conditioning that does not work), you have the right to ask for immediate repairs or a switch to a different cabin. Also, you must accept that any cruise comes with a certain level of noise and motion on board. You do have the right to “quiet enjoyment” of your cruise, however, so if your cabin sits next to the ship’s boiler room with clanking noises that keep you awake throughout the night, you should contact your room steward or the purser immediately for a cabin change.



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# RESOLUTIONS FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

By Wendy Landreville, MD



It's that time of year again. Parties and holiday feasts abound, and it seems that around every corner is yet another tempting treat. At the end of this season of eating, we often find ourselves five to 10 pounds heavier than when we started, with staunch New Year's resolutions to start the latest diet craze. Then sometime around mid- to late January, resolve weakens and those added pounds become a permanent fixture.

There is little need to point out that as a nation, America is getting fatter. We are confronted with this information on an almost daily basis. Obesity is a growing public-health epidemic; current estimates put 65 percent of U.S. adults in the "overweight" category, and 31 percent are considered "obese." Overweight is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 25 to 30, and obesity is BMI of 30 or greater. Calculate your BMI by visiting the following Web site: <http://nhlbisupport.com/bmi/bmicalc.htm>.

With obesity comes significant health risks: diabetes, cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and strokes), sleep apnea, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, gall bladder disease, arthritis and depression.

As a family practitioner, I am confronted with the daunting challenge of treating overweight and obese children, adolescents and adults on a daily basis. My recommendations are simple: Eat less, exercise more. This advice is easy to give, but much harder to execute. The good news is that even modest amounts of weight loss can significantly decrease the risk of the aforementioned medical conditions. Also, once these lifestyle changes are made, increased energy, improved sleep and enhanced sense of well-being are often immediate rewards.

In this confusing time of diet and exercise gimmicks, I try to keep my recommendations for a healthy lifestyle simple and based on current medical evidence:

- \* Exercise 45 minutes per day most days of the week. This can be any activity that you enjoy that gets your heart rate up and causes you to work up a sweat.
- \* Choose a well-balanced diet of lean proteins (fish, chicken, turkey and lean cuts of beef), low-fat dairy sources, monounsaturated fats (olive oil, canola oil and nuts) and high fiber carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables and whole grains). Avoid breads, pastas, potatoes and processed snack foods.
- \* Eat small meals/snacks consisting of protein, good carbohydrates and monounsaturated fats throughout the day.
- \* Drink at least eight glasses of water per day. Avoid soft drinks, excessive caffeine and fruit juices.
- \* Be mindful of restaurant portion sizes (at most restaurants,

portions are enough for two or three meals for the average person).

Choose to incorporate as much activity into your day as possible: Walk rather than drive, take the stairs rather than the elevator, get up to change the TV channel (or better yet, skip watching TV and go for a walk!), park in the farthest available spot from your destination, and walk to the store.

While a new year is a good opportunity to start fresh, resolutions should not be considered a quick fix for holiday indulgences. Small steps to slowly incorporate these changes into your daily routine will guarantee many healthier new years to come.

*Photo Caption: Dr. Wendy Landreville is a family practitioner at the Redwood Shores Health Center of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Endnote: The Palo Alto Medical Foundation and column editor Arian Dasmalchi provide this monthly column.*



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## For the Love of Good Food

By Susan Prescott

### Winter Soups - Cheer up your January with these nourishing recipes!



On cold and wet winter nights we often look for comfort foods to warm us and make us feel cozy. What better way to do that than to have a steaming bowl of delicious soup? The following two recipes are simple, healthy yet elegant soups for all the family or to start off a meal with friends. Both make use of root crops that are at their best in the winter months. Potage Crecy is named after a town in Flanders in northern France where carrots and leeks grow at this time of year. The second soup is an American hybrid using an orange colored turnip variety from Europe and the new world potato, and very tasty it is too.

#### Ingredients for carrot & leek "Potage Crecy" (serves 6)

1oz butter or oil

1lb peeled and roughly chopped carrots

1lb roughly chopped white part leeks

sufficient water or chicken broth to cover

1. Sweat carrots and leeks in the fat over a low heat in a covered 4-quart saucepan.
2. Once translucent, add broth and cook gently in the covered pan (about 45 minutes).
3. Once the vegetables are very soft, allow to cool slightly and put in blender. Process until smooth. Thin, if necessary, with stock, water or a little milk. Taste for seasoning, but it should not need either salt or pepper.
4. Serve with a swirl of low fat sour cream and chopped chives.

#### Ingredients for Sweet Potato-Rutabaga Soup with Bacon (8 cups)


1 1/2 lb peeled chopped sweet potato (1/2 inch cubes)

1 1/2 lb peeled chopped rutabaga (sometimes called Swede)

5 slices bacon chopped into 1/4 inch pieces

1. Heat 1/2 bacon gently in a 4-quart pot to render the fat. Do not crisp.
  2. Add vegetables, turn with a large spoon to cover in fat and cook over medium heat for 2 minutes.
  3. Add 5 cups water, 1 tsp salt and 12 peppercorns. Bring to the boil. Lower heat and cover. Cook 45 minutes or more so vegetables are very soft.
  4. Cook the remaining bacon in a large skillet until just crisp. Drain on paper towels.
  5. Blend the vegetables in batches until very smooth. Return to the pot and adjust seasoning if necessary.
  6. Serve in shallow bowls with crispy bacon crumbled on top.
- N.B. You can replace bacon with an inch of finely chopped ginger and 4 cloves of garlic at the start of cooking, and sweat in olive oil. Serve with crispy croutons and snipped chives or cilantro.

## THE WINE ENTHUSIAST - BY Tom



As a youngster I and my siblings lived in a small town in the coal mining region of Utah. Our nightly entertainment was radio programs like "The 'Shadow,'" The Lone Range and "The Cisco Kid." We also read books, solved 50 piece jigsaw puzzles, and played gin rummy. On Saturday afternoon we wolfed down fresh popcorn while transfixed by movie westerns with Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and for the real trivia buff, Gabby Hayes and Wallace Beery. Outside, in good weather, we explored the surrounding semi-desert countryside, played "Cowboys and Indians," and "Marbles," and at nightfall, nothing created more shrieking and mock trauma than "Hide and Seek." When it snowed we built bulbous snowmen, pummeled each other with icy snow balls, and took eye popping belly sleigh rides down the nearby, not so gentle slopes. Pure Norman Rockwell stuff.

And, of course, all those stressing activities brought with it the inevitable sore throat, high temperatures, or some other bed-confining ailment that required aspirins, mentholated chest rubs, and a little TLC. Tender Loving Care came in different forms, a warm bowl of home made chicken broth, a long tender embrace on mother's lap, or another therapy that lingers most vividly in my emotional hard drives.

My father would close his tiny shoe shine shop go to one of the corner drug store "soda fountains," order a thick, chocolate malted shake and then, bag in hand, trek the mile or so home to present his personal version of Tender Loving Care. Just the sight of the waxy Dixie Cup container coming out of the brown paper bag lifted my mood immediately, and after just a few draws on the straw, my temperature seemed to drop in synch with the level of the milk shake. Recovery was well under way long before the bottom of the cup was visible.

Last night I spoke on the phone with my brother who, with his wife, is providing our 94 year old mother a first class, heroic version of care giving. What brought the above recollection to mind was our conversation about their dinner nights. Each and every night they serve her a little wine with dinner. Not much, maybe a shot glass full, but enough to make dinnertime a little special. And just as chocolate, rather than vanilla was the therapy of preference for me, red wine, not white, seems to deliver the requisite emotional impact for her. Pretty good palate I'd say.

In any case, this little dinner ritual is TLC at its finest, and those few ounces effectively serve their intended purpose. They lift her spirits, ensure that she will eat, remind her of the sacramental aspects of wine, and overall, including aiding digestion, probably do more good than many medications. Of course, other than the psychological benefits of an ounce or two of wine, there is also evidence that hints at the healthful (cardiovascular) aspects of moderate wine consumption. Remember the French Paradox? Moderate wine intake over a relaxed, convivial dinner table, spread out over an hour or so with family and friends? Happy New Year everyone.



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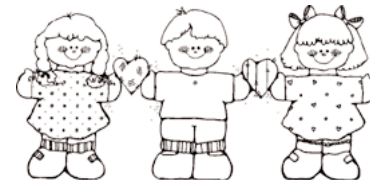


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*By Steve Chun, Redwood Shores Cleaners*

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# THE SPIRITUALITY OF WAITING

By Rev. Chip Larrimore

Rector, St Peter's Episcopal Church

At the height of the Christmas shopping season, a young boy was standing at the bottom of a department store escalator, staring intently at the handrail as it moved along and refusing to take his eyes away. A saleswoman asked, "Are you lost?" "Nope," the boy said, "I'm just waiting for my chewing gum to come back."

That boy displayed an admirable patience, but most children find it hard to wait for the things they want. For that matter, so do adults. For Christians, having just been through a season of waiting (Advent) the tendency when we get to Christmas is to feel like the waiting is over. And even if you're not Christian, the coming of the New Year always seems to bring with it a sense of having "arrived." But waiting is something we all need to learn to live with.

Waiting is also a big part of our ongoing spiritual journey. We come to God in prayer, and we want instant communion with God. We ask for something, and we want it immediately—a job offered, an ailment healed, a broken marriage repaired. We seek God's direction for our lives or God's guidance on a decision we have to make and we want the answer right away.

Scripture tells us, however, that waiting is a part of life. Sometimes we want an answer, a vision, a direction for our lives, and it doesn't come right when we ask for it. What are we to do then? Sometimes, after we've waited a long time, we may discern that what we're asking for is not God's will. But before we can make that determination, we must wait.

There are at least three things to be said for developing a spirituality that is willing to wait for God.

First, waiting for God shows a strength of faith, not an absence of it. One writer has compared the need to wait for God to the experience of entering a darkened room. When you first enter the room, you must wait for your eyes to get adjusted to the dark before you can see. In the same way, we must get adjusted to God when we seek guidance or come to God in prayer.

A second point is that waiting for God is a sign of humility. It is a sign that God is the driving force in our lives. Rather than

being a sign of a sterile or empty faith, waiting for God is a sign of real spirituality, a sign that we are approaching our lives in a way that allows God to guide us and enlighten us.

But there is still a third point to be made about the spirituality of waiting. You see, the Scriptures add a whole other dimension to the question by saying that God has to wait for us, too. This is a tradition that transcends denominations or faith traditions. The Christian and Hebrew Scriptures refer to "God's patience" dating back to the time of Noah. And other traditions speak of this as well. Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and any of a number of other religious traditions speak of God's patience and willingness to wait in every age for us to be open and willing to hear and live out the message of God's presence in our lives.

Sometimes we have to wait to see how God's promises are realized. If it seems slow, wait for it patiently and faithfully; but know that it will come, in the fullness of God's love and time.

Most importantly, know that you can never wait for God in vain. The answer you seek, the guidance you pray for, the presence and the help you need are sure to come. God will come to renew your strength. This is the promise to all who seek a greater knowledge of God in faith. Sometimes all we need is the strength to wait.



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## IMPROVE YOUR MUSCULOSKELETAL HEALTH IN 2004

*By Angelo Charonis, D.C.*

### *Excerpts from an American Chiropractic Association (ACA) statement as follows:*

Doctors of chiropractic, in particular, have long emphasized the importance of spinal health, posture and other lifestyle factors in the body's ability to function optimally. Poor spinal health, for instance, can cause a negative chain reaction throughout the body. It can cause stress on joints, which, especially if the muscles are weak, can cause wear and permanent damage. The ACA and your local doctor of chiropractic offer the following advice to help improve and maintain your musculoskeletal health.

#### **At the Office:**

\* Make sure your chair fits correctly. There should be 2 inches between the front edge of the seat and the back of your legs. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, with your knees at a 90-degree angle. If you can't sit that way, use an angled or elevated footrest.

\* Take periodic stretch breaks. Clench your hands in a fist and move your hands like this: 10 circles in, then 10 circles out. Put your hands in a praying position and squeeze together for 10 seconds and then “pray” with the backs of your hands together, fingers pointed downward for 10 seconds. Spread your fingers apart and then bring them together one by one.

\* Hold the telephone with your hand or use the speakerphone or headset. Don't cradle the phone between your ear and shoulder.

This can lock up the spinal joints in the neck and upper back, and eventually cause pain.

\* Take breaks and alternate tasks that use different muscle groups.

\* Arrange your desk so that everything is handy—phone, mouse, reference materials, reports—to minimize awkward stretching and reaching.

\* Position your computer monitor so that the middle of your chin is aligned with the middle of your monitor. This will allow for good neck posture.

#### **At Home:**

\* When you wash the dishes, open the cabinet beneath the sink, bend one knee, and put your foot on the shelf under the sink. Lean against the counter so some of your weight is supported in front.

\* When resting or watching TV, don't use the sofa arm as a pillow. The angle is much too sharp for the neck.

\* Don't bend from the waist when you lift a child. Squat with your back straight. Keep the child close to you and use your legs and arms to lift. Upcoming future advice on: In The Yard, Playing Sports, While Traveling, For Children.

*Dr. Charonis practices at Premier Chiropractic Clinic in Redwood Shores*

