



# MEMORIES MUSINGS

By Cheri Sims

Cheri lives, writes and gardens in Charleston.

If the lower temperatures were not enough to tell me the season is changing then the actions of the kitty cats sure are. The two inside cats are in snuggling mode and Arthur, the outside cat, has moved to the chair on the deck that gets more sunlight. I decided that if Mittens and Pitou are starting to cuddle then Arthur must be ready for his warm heat pad; so I laundered it and hooked it up in his favorite chair. Arthur has not ventured into his cat house so I will wait a bit longer to turn on the heat light.

drives in the Tri-County area would be more prudent. I thought I would get back to hiking this Fall but I took a tumble during my last walk and really banged up my left knee. I have experienced a couple days of using a cane to help get around but thankfully nothing is broken. I could still hike with my walking stick but I am not sure that would be wise on the uneven ground of a hiking trail. Oh well, not to worry, it will heal and I can wait a little longer.

On my walk the other day I saw the first signs of turning leaf color, just a bit of yellow in a couple trees but when I walked around the Charleston Square I saw a couple of the trees were all turned yellow. They are so pretty that I decided I had better take a country drive this weekend. Leaf peeping has always been a favorite time for us and I think a long country drive is just what is needed as a pick me up from staying home so much. I had planned a Fall trip to Brown County, Indiana this year but with all the uncertainty surrounding travel I think long

At least I can still stand at the stove and prepare some of my favorite Fall goodies. September is apple month in our family but I like to wait until October before I make my pumpkin recipes. I had a lot of extra computer time last year and have found some new things to try but I am most excited about the pumpkin gingerbread bread pudding recipe my friend, RR, from Toronto, sent to me. She had traveled to Quebec last Fall and was served the pudding at the bed and breakfast where she stayed in old town Quebec City. The owner of the B&B found the recipe on the Food Network Canada website and she thought we

would all like to try it. The Canadians, like the British, call it simply "a pudding"; here in the states we would call it a bread pudding. I am not sure why the difference, it all tastes the same, but calling it a pudding sounds pretty cool.

RR also sent a really interesting idea for pumpkin spice caramel apples. She said to use a favorite caramel apple recipe but prepare this spice mixture; 1/4 cup raw sugar, 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon, 1/4 tsp ground ginger, 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg and 1/4 tsp ground cloves then roll the apples in the caramel sauce and then roll in the spice mixture before resting on wax paper to cool. This version sounds yummy and a nice change of caramel apple pace.

Her third pumpkin recipe was quite a giggle. She took the same pumpkin spice mixture that she used for the caramel apples and mixed two tablespoons in a cup of hot coffee and added a couple tablespoons of hot milk to make a "poor man's" pumpkin latte. It sounded so good that I tried it immediately and am hooked! I shall just make up a batch of the spice mixture and keep it in a jar next to the coffee maker. This spice mixture is less expensive than buying seasonal coffee blends and really tastes better.

A couple of websites I happened upon, you might want to look at for unique pumpkin recipes; The Taste of Home website (<https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/vintage-pumpkin-dessert-recipes/>) has a great selection of vintage pumpkin recipes and a couple I would love to try. The one that caught my eye was the Pumpkin Torte recipe. The picture is beautiful and very festive and just might be my Thanksgiving dessert this year. The pumpkin rice pudding and pumpkin chocolate chip cookie recipes are pretty special also and if I make all the recipes I would like to make I will be in serious weight trouble. The second web site is "Eat Like a Pilgrim at (<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/restaurants/2015/11/24/pilgrim-recipes-thanksgiving/>). This site had recipes from the 17th Century and is a great read.

Pumpkin used as a vegetable is highly underrated, in my opinion, and is a great way to get the pumpkin flavor without all the sugar. So few of my friends ever use it as a vegetable but I have tried it a couple different ways and really enjoy it. Hubby was quite fond of pumpkin wedges wrapped in a slice of bacon and roasted in the oven. All I did was to peel one inch wedges of pumpkin, sprinkle them with a little salt and pepper and wrap each wedge in a slice of bacon and roast them at 350 until the wedge was soft. My favorite veggie pumpkin recipe is simply my homemade potato soup recipe with chopped up pumpkin added to the potatoes when I boil them. The added pumpkin changes the flavor but

and causes them to get rigid and inflexible. Obesity also causes inflammation by increasing the amount of estrogen your body produces. Estrogen can be produced by fat cells! Extra estrogen causes more damage to the arteries and veins too.

This damage to the inner lining of the blood vessels leads to them becoming stiff and rigid. This makes it harder for blood to smoothly pass through those blood vessels. Your body's response to this increase in friction make your heart contract harder. This can lead to higher blood pressure and also lead to heart disease over time. How does this relate to COVID-19?

still maintains that yummy potato soup flavor.

Happy Fall!

## Pumpkin Gingerbread

### Puttting

#### Pumpkin Loaf

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup pure pumpkin purée
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Custard
- 4 large eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup fancy molasses
- 3 cups milk
- 1 cup whipping cream (35 percent)
- 1 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground allspice
- 1/4 tsp ground clove

#### Pumpkin Loaf

1. Preheat the oven to 325 °F (160 °C). Grease a 9-x-5-inch loaf pan and line the sides with parchment so that it comes up the sides.

2. Cream the butter and sugar together in a large mixing bowl and add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Whisk the pumpkin puree and milk together and stir this into the butter mixture. In a separate bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ginger and cinnamon and

stir this into the batter until incorporated. Pour into the prepared pan and bake the cake for 60-70 minutes, until a tester inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Cool the cake for 30 minutes in the tin before turning it out to cool completely. The loaf can be made a day ahead and wrapped until ready to use (or is delicious all on its own!)

#### Custard

1. Once cooled, cut the loaf into 1-inch (25 mm) cubes and place them into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs and egg yolks and then whisk in the brown sugar, molasses, milk, cream and spices. Pour this over the pumpkin loaf cubes stir to coat and let this sit for 10 minutes to absorb, stirring once or twice – don't be concerned if the pumpkin loaf breaks down a bit as you stir.

2. Preheat the oven to 350 °F (180 °C) and grease a 9-inch springform pan. Line the outside bottom and sides of the pan with tin foil (to prevent leaks) and place the pan in a roasting pan or other dish that can be filled with water. Pour the bread pudding mix into the springform pan and fill the roasting pan with boiling water. Bake this for about 90 minutes, until a tester inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Remove the pan from the water bath onto a cooling rack to cool to room temperature, then chill for at least 4 hours before serving. <https://www.foodnetwork.ca/recipe/pumpkin-gingerbread-pudding/16799/>



# REAL LIFE WELLNESS

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

The Best Defense is a Great Offense with COVID-19

I mentioned this phrase a few weeks ago, but I think it is time to hammer this point home completely. The absolute best way to be free of COVID-19, even if you are unlucky enough to become infected, is to get and stay healthy right now!

I know this sounds too simple, but if you look at the numbers, most of the

people who get sick from COVID-19 and have lasting problems have underlying health conditions. Diabetes, Obesity, High Blood Pressure and Heart Disease are the most common diseases that can lead to a poor outcome with COVID-19. Every one of those diseases are largely due to lifestyle issues and can be reversed if caught

early enough in life. Resilience is a term that has been thrown around in scientific circles lately. Resilience refers to your body's ability to fight and win against any stressor. That stressor can be toxins, stress, injury and even COVID-19 infections. If your body is healthy and has a good balance between your natural Inflammation response and Immune System, your resilience remains high and you can fight off and resolve any insult that comes your way.

Diabetes and Obesity both increase the amount of inflammation you have in your body. High blood sugar inflames the inner lining of your arteries and veins

and causes them to get rigid and inflexible. Obesity also causes inflammation by increasing the amount of estrogen your body produces. Estrogen can be produced by fat cells! Extra estrogen causes more damage to the arteries and veins too.

This damage to the inner lining of the blood vessels leads to them becoming stiff and rigid. This makes it harder for blood to smoothly pass through those blood vessels. Your body's response to this increase in friction make your heart contract harder. This can lead to higher blood pressure and also lead to heart disease over time. How does this relate to COVID-19?

How does this relate to COVID-19? The latest research discusses how important a substance called Bradykinin is to control if you get infected with COVID-19. They first thought the problem was excessive cytokines. This was called the cytokine storm. This was thought to lead to many of the early deaths. What they have since discovered is it is bradykinin not cytokines that lead to people getting pneumonia and dying.

Bradykinin is an extremely important part of your resilience system because it helps control blood pressure and is important in controlling all types of inflammation in your body. If you keep your bradykinin in

balance, your ability to have a strong immune system and control your inflammatory response is greatly enhanced. Plus, it is never too late to turn your lifestyle around and get your blood sugar and high blood pressure under control to manage your bradykinin levels. So, when you feel like you have lost all control of the world around you, always remember you can control what you put in your mouth, think about and do with your body. Think clean, eat clean and move your body to continually increase its resilience. This will help you keep healthy and everything will bounce off you, even COVID-19!

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# The importance of keeping your body moving from the LifeSpan Center

The heart is a muscle and needs exercise to stay in shape. When it's exercised, the heart can pump more blood through the body and continue working at optimal efficiency with little strain. This will likely help it to stay healthy longer.

Regular exercise also helps to keep arteries and other blood vessels flexible, ensuring good blood flow and normal blood pressure and cholesterol. It's amazing how much physical activity can benefit our hearts. And it's no secret – the lack of physical activity is an open invitation to cardiovascular

disease!

Don't worry—when it comes to exercise, a little bit done on a regular basis goes a long way. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), exercising 30 minutes a day, five days a week will improve your heart health and help reduce your risk of heart disease. Think you don't have time? You don't have to do all 30 minutes at once. You'll get the same benefits if you divide your time into manageable ten minute sessions, three times a day.

So, you found your keys; you finished the laundry; you

found the motivation to clean out your closet. You can accomplish this too! Now that those things are out of the way, you can find 30 minutes in your day to get physically active — and there are plenty of easy, no-cost ways to do it. It can be as simple as walking quickly for just 30 minutes a day. And the housecleaning you did while you were procrastinating? Believe it or not, that counts as exercise, too. You don't have to go for an actual run to get a runner's high. That rush you get at the sight of a gleaming bathroom counts too! Win-win!

A lot of our physical

aches and pains come from underuse, not overuse. When muscles, ligament, tendons, and fascia aren't used, they get tight. The less they're used, the tighter they get and that tightness causes a lot of pain, particularly in the lower back and joints. Walking is a gentle way to get moving and keep moving so our bodies stay limber, flexible, and pain free.

Do you have difficulty walking? You're certainly not alone. Being disabled or having chronic pain or illness can really limit your exercise choices – but there are many options available if

you are really interested! It's a good idea to start your journey to better health by going to your doctor/nurse practitioner, and have them set you up with in-home physical therapy. There are plenty of physical therapy options depending on your insurance coverage. You should definitely see your doctor or health-care professional before considering which option might be best for your disability. Together, you can decide whether you might be able to do some of the exercises at home – that would offer you the best opportunity to set your own schedule.

Regardless of physical limitations, be sure to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise routine, as exercising with a heart condition can put extra strain on your heart. Learn the signs of heart trouble during exercise and don't over-exert yourself to ensure you're helping, not hurting your heart. You want to keep your body moving, and that includes keeping the heart healthy. Do your best and challenge yourself to do better. That's what matters most!

# Illinois DCFS announces October is Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month

Illinois DCFS public service announcement re-

minds parents of the ABCs of safe sleep. Unsafe sleep

is a leading cause of death for children one year old and younger; and with families spending more time at home together or making plans to safely visit relatives as the holiday season approaches, Illinois DCFS is reminding parents of three simple steps they can take to ensure their

infants are put to sleep safely.

"It is critical for parents and caregivers to learn and use the ABCs of Safe Sleep," said Illinois DCFS Acting Director Marc D. Smith. "A baby should sleep Alone, on his or her Back, in a safe Crib – every time. Infant safe sleep deaths are preventable,

and we are all responsible for ensuring parents and caregivers are aware of the danger to their child when they do not create a safe sleeping environment."

In 2019, 108 infants in Illinois under the age of 1 died as a result of being put to sleep unsafely. 87 were found in locations other than a crib, bassinet or 'pack and play;' 76 were found in positions other than on their back; and 71 were co-sleeping with another individual at the time of death.

Infants sleep safest alone in a crib with a firm mattress and tightly-fitted sheet. The crib should be free of pillows, blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals and toys. Infants should never be placed on an adult bed or couch to sleep. If parents of young children are traveling, they should call ahead to make sure their accommodations include a crib or bring a 'pack and play' to their hotel or relatives' residence if one

is not available.

## About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

(DCFS) Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25- ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.

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