The Network News 2013
March Issue #155

Next Meeting
April 9th

Dating as a Gay Man in Portland: + and –

John Motter

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Dine Out Fight AIDS

www.diningoutforlife.com/Portland

Benefits
Winter appears to be behind us – I think. Spring and warmer temperatures are (hopefully) around the corner. We’ll start coming out of our hibernation modes to seek sun, fun and new adventures in the great outdoors. Meals need to be quick, but still be healthy. Whole grains are versatile, high in protein, vitamins and minerals and are a good addition to your recipe tool chest.

What exactly is a whole grain? It is a grain where the bran, endosperm (starchy part) and germ have not been processed or milled out. The bran is the outer covering of the grain that contains the all important fiber and also B vitamins. The endosperm is the starchy inside part of the grain, the germ contains more B vitamins, protein, minerals and good oils. The goal is to get at least 4 servings of whole grains a day.

If you are not familiar with whole grains, here is a list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole Corn</th>
<th>Buckwheat*</th>
<th>Farro</th>
<th>Sorghum*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn</td>
<td>Amaranth*</td>
<td>Kamut</td>
<td>Spelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Rice</td>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>Quinoa*</td>
<td>Triticale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgur</td>
<td>Brown Rice*</td>
<td>Millet*</td>
<td>Whole Rye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Wheat</td>
<td>Cracked Wheat</td>
<td>Wheat Berries</td>
<td>Teff*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*these grains are also gluten free

So, why is all this important? When it comes to HIV, whole grains provide many nutrients that are good for the immune system and also help prevent many of the chronic conditions that are becoming more prevalent, such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and high blood pressure. Whole grains are full of antioxidants, a major player in boosting up the immune system, and fiber – the wonder nutrient.

Quinoa is one of my favorite go to grains. It has twice as much protein as the rest of the grains, making it ideal if you are following a plant based diet. There may be a little more in the process of cooking it, but there are so many things you can do with it. It can be added as a filler to recipes, eaten as a hot or cold cereal, and used as a base for great cold salads. The trick with quinoa is that you need to rinse it VERY well before cooking it. Put the quinoa in a fine mesh strainer and rinse well and long with cool water. Repeat this process several times before cooking it. Since I want to save time so I can spend more time outside, I make a big batch, freeze some for later use, and create dishes that be eaten for any meal though out the week.

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Here are some ideas:

**As a hot cereal**  – I add dried fruit such as raisins, black currents, dried figs or apricots. I drizzle on a little black strap molasses for flavor and as an iron source.
**As a cold cereal**  – I add a little chopped apple, celery, sunflower seeds, bok choy, maybe a little crumbled cheese, and drizzle on my favorite raspberry dressing.
**As a main dish salad**  – add some lemon juice, olive oil, pinch of salt, pepper, chopped cucumber, parsley and mint to make a quinoa tabbouleh.

**Ways to keep it interesting:**
- **Use cooked and fresh vegetables to vary the texture.** Try sliced fennel, boy choy, sweet peppers, assorted greens, etc. Visit a local farmers market for more inspiration and tips.
- **Remember the rainbow**  – the more colors the better.
- **Add assorted nuts and seeds.** Toasting nuts or seeds will also add another layer of flavor, along with providing more protein.
- **Add fresh, dried or frozen fruits**  – blueberries, raspberries, apples, raisins, currents, figs, dates, apricots, crisp pears, cherries, citrus fruits, etc add color, texture and nutrients.
- **Simple tart dressings are the best.** Use a variety of vinegars, citrus juices and just enough olive oil to coat the grains. Amp up the flavor by adding fresh herbs (dill, chives, parsley, thyme, lemon grass, etc), a little fresh chile, toasted spices.
- **Power up the protein**  – add chopped meats, eggs, cheese or beans

If you need to know more, check out Bob’s Red Mill, a local company that specializes in whole foods and grains. The store carries an extensive line of products along with a nice café. The web site is loaded with recipes and other information for adding more whole foods and grains to your meals.

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**What is happening with health care reform in Oregon?**

Are you confused about what is happening with health care reform in Oregon, the CCOs (Coordinated Care Organizations), the Affordable Care Act, etc?

A couple of places to receive information and access to community meetings is at the [Oregon Health Policy Board website](http://www.oregonhealthpolicy.com) and at [Cover Oregon](http://www.coveroregon.org)

Let us know what you are learning so we can share with the community.
Back Pain Claims: Most Common Disability

There are more Social Security disability claims based on back pain than any other condition. The medical record may not fully support a patient’s reported pain and movement limitations. What to do?

Social Security wants a patient’s pain symptoms to be supported by “objective” findings of physical abnormalities. These would be x-rays, CT scans, MRI’s, lumbar myelograms or bone scans. Nerve conduction studies may be helpful. Keep in mind that soft tissue damage such as a bulging disc will not show up in an x-ray. In order to win a case, a claimant’s records must show:

- Pain, muscle spasm, and significant limitation of motion in spine.
- Documented pain distribution and significant motor loss with muscle weakness, sensory and reflex loss.

These factors must have persisted for at least three months despite prescribed therapy, and last or be expected to last at least 12 months.

If the condition does not exactly meet the letter of the law, there is a consideration of functional ability, and these impairments must be well supported by the evidence. This is also true in cases of failed back surgery.

Depression is a common component of back pain syndromes, and this should be considered and documented. Also important are the side effects of pain medications, such as drowsiness, confusion, lethargy.

Ideally, a treating physician will supply records or a report that contains these elements:

- Any surgical discharge notes
- The character, location, and radiation of the patient’s pain
- Activities that increase or relieve pain
- Prescribed treatment, including frequency of medication
- The patient’s typical daily activities

Description of problems with gait, limitation of movement of the spine, and any numbness or muscle spasm.

Medical reports must be based on objective observations during the patient’s examination, not simply from patient’s statements.

Sometimes former work is impossible because of pain. Social Security applies a complex set of guidelines to these cases, evaluating other work for which the claimant is suited. This is done by considering age, education, and transferable skills. If a claimant’s impairments still prevent full-time work (eight hours a day, five days a week) functional disability may still be proved and the case may be won. Unfortunately, Social Security does not consider the current job market, or available work, just jobs for which a claimant is qualified under the law.