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## PrimeTimes Newsletter, Winter 2013

Office of Lifespan Studies

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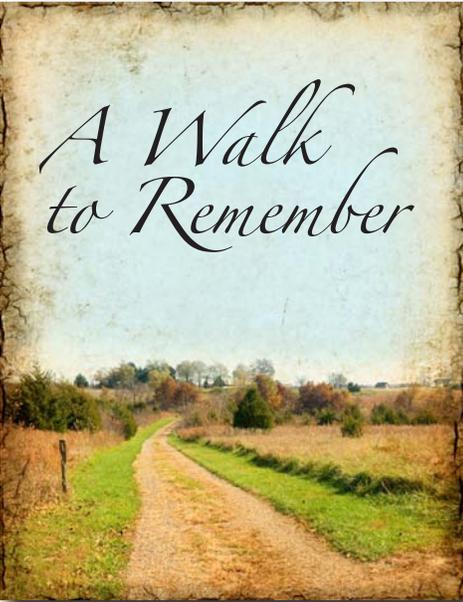
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# Prime Times

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE • OFFICE OF LIFESPAN STUDIES • COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

WINTER 2013



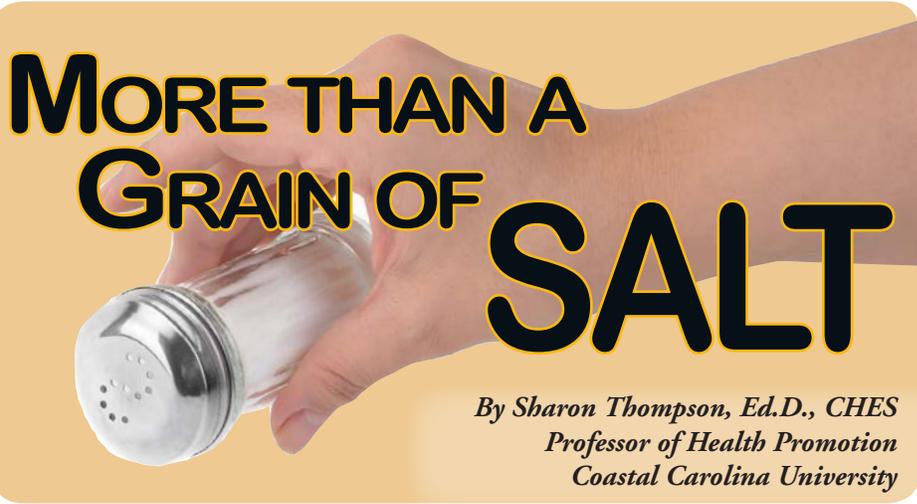
By Bridgette Johnson

When I was in school, I spent a good amount of time at my Granddaddy's house. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's when I was in the fifth grade and soon after that, we, meaning my mother and I, along with my Uncle Edsel, began rotating sleepovers at his home in Bayboro.

When I think now of Bayboro, I get this feeling of what we Horry County folk term the "old home place." It is a place that ignites, way down deep inside, a feeling of complete safety and absolute ease and contentment. It was a place nestled in a time when life was a bit slower, the grass a bit greener, and the honey a bit sweeter. That's exactly what I feel when I remember this place, my Granddaddy, his house, his old spit can and his quiet easy way of life – it's a peaceful, easy feeling. It represents the simple

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## MORE THAN A GRAIN OF SALT



By Sharon Thompson, Ed.D., CHES  
Professor of Health Promotion  
Coastal Carolina University

We are all born with a taste for salt. Salt, or more appropriately, sodium chloride, is needed daily in the human diet for us to thrive. If we did not enjoy the taste of salt, we might not consume it and our health would be threatened; however, the absolute minimum amount we need, 500 mg per day, is far less than the 3,400 mg that Americans consume daily. This average amount consumed in the American diet well exceeds all recommendations and can be harmful to health.

In 2010, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans noted that African Americans, adults 51 or older, or those who had hypertension, diabetes or chronic kidney disease should consume no more than 1,500 mg/day of sodium. It was recommended that those ages nine to 50 try to consume 1,500 mg/day (as an "adequate intake") and the upper level of sodium for these ages should be no more than 2,300 mg/day.

Recent reports have provided a bit more flexibility in sodium intake. In 2013 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) issued a report where they examined "...the direct effects of sodium on

health outcomes, not just blood pressure as an indicator of risk." Consistent with current research, they found a positive relationship between higher sodium intake and cardiovascular disease risk. They did report that for some subgroups, such as those with severe congestive heart failure or specific aggressive therapeutic treatments, sodium consumption less than 2,300 mg/day could lead to greater health risks. They found no evidence for benefit, and possibility some risk, for those with diabetes, kidney disease or cardiovascular disease when daily sodium intake was reduced to the 1,500 to 2,300 mg per day range. They reported no evidence to treat population subgroups differently. The IOM recently reported that sodium intake of around 2,300 mg/day is acceptable and intake may not necessarily need to be further lowered to promote health. So, although a sodium intake of 2,300 mg/day provides a bit of flexibility, it is still much less than most Americans consume.

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# COPING WITH TURBULENT INVESTMENT MARKETS

*By Norman F. Whiteley*

The past few years have been especially challenging for investors, and it's during stressful times like this that investors often make some serious errors...errors like selling equity investments after the markets go down and then putting assets into "safer" fixed income investments only to find that those investments go down and equities take off. Furthermore, jumping entirely into fixed annuities in order to escape the volatility can be an error as well. How should an investor cope with markets such as we have had in a way that allows reasonable long-term returns to be realized while minimizing the shorter-term day to day stress?

First of all, always apply a few fundamental investing principles to your investment discipline.

1. Investing in stocks is a long-term proposition. You should be prepared to keep your investment for at least five years and preferably 10.
2. Individual bonds are only safe depending on the credit worthiness of the issuer and if held to maturity. Bond funds, on the other hand, are vulnerable to interest rate risk.
3. Diversification is a fundamental strategy for controlling risk. Make sure your portfolio is well diversified with an appropriate mix of stocks, bonds and cash. Each individual must adjust the mixture of these asset classes to conform to his or her objectives and risk tolerance.
4. Keep enough cash on hand to cover short-term expenses. My suggestion would be enough cash for at least three to six months.

With those few principles in mind, how should an investor cope with turbulence? For the stock portion of the portfolio, investing in a diversified mix of solid, well-established companies that pay strong dividends and have a history of increasing those dividends over an extended period will help reduce volatility. A number of traditional mutual funds or exchange traded funds offer a mix of such stocks. They generally go under names like low-volatility stock funds or dividend appreciating stocks. They will tend to hold their value much better than the market as a whole, although they will go up and down with the market. For diversification, be sure not only to diversify by industry sector but also by geography as well.

For the bond portion of the portfolio, during periods when interest rates are expected to increase, such as at present, keeping to shorter duration maturities are best. While the bonds may suffer as rates rise, they will still tend to provide some balance to stocks and help reduce volatility.

For those who require a steady income from investments, a fixed annuity for a portion of the portfolio may be appropriate, but I would suggest that at least some significant portion be kept in stocks. Over the long-term, stocks tend to outperform other investment categories and will be necessary to cope with inflation.

Adjusting the allocation to stocks, bonds and cash will depend on the individual time horizon and risk tolerance. For someone who will not need the investment principal for 10 years and who has a high

risk tolerance, committing a high allocation to stocks will generally produce best results. That allocation may be 70 percent or more. For someone who has a shorter time horizon and/or a lower tolerance for risk, the allocation to stocks may be significantly less.

For those who have significant cash and would like to invest in the market but are afraid to jump in at the wrong time, dollar-cost-averaging is a proven strategy for long-term success. Simply divide the cash available into equal amounts, and then buy an amount of stocks at equal intervals. For example, if you have \$10,000 to invest, divide it into \$1,000 increments, and then buy \$1,000 worth of a diversified stock fund each month or each week until the \$10,000 is invested. During those periods when prices are down, you will get more shares and when prices are up, you will get fewer. Studies have shown that this method is better and more reliable for achieving the best results than trying to guess when the stocks have hit bottom. Reinvesting dividends, if they are not needed immediately, is another way of employing the dollar-cost averaging technique that usually produces beneficial results.

These are just a few ways in which an investor can cope with volatile markets. The overriding principle, however, is to “keep cool” and don’t let the short-term volatility cause you to make mistakes that will result in long-term damage. §



*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. Whiteley started a website for the OLLI Investor Education Club dealing with investing questions or expertise sharing at [groups.google.com/group/investment-fundamentals](https://groups.google.com/group/investment-fundamentals). If you're interested in his monthly newsletter, you can request it via email. He can be reached at [nwhiteley@sc.rr.com](mailto:nwhiteley@sc.rr.com).*

## SENIORS TAKING CLASSES AT COASTAL

If a *PrimeTimes* reader would be interested in taking classes in areas of interest, it can be done at CCU. Residents of South Carolina age 60 or above and who are not employed full time can enroll in classes free-of-charge provided there is available space in the class.

Senior citizens must complete an additional Free Tuition Application for Senior Citizens to verify their age and South Carolina residency.

This application is available in the Office of Admissions or online at [coastal.edu/admissions/applications.html](https://coastal.edu/admissions/applications.html).



# Tai Chi for Life

*By Karman S. Gossett, BA, LMT*

Believe it! There is a simple activity you can do just twice weekly to grow stronger in mind and body, prevent falls, elevate your mood, decrease pain and improve your overall quality of life. Tai chi! The benefits of tai chi, an ancient Eastern form of gentle exercise, are increasingly demonstrated by a significant body of evidence. What is tai chi?

Tai chi (pronounced TIE-CHEE) is an ancient Eastern tradition that is practiced as a graceful form of exercise. It involves deep breathing and a series of movements performed in a slow, focused manner. Tai chi is a self-paced form of gentle physical exercise and stretching. Each posture flows into the next to ensure slow, but constant movement. As your body gently moves, so does your blood. When your blood moves, your energy and overall health improve.

The term tai chi can be loosely translated as great life force or supreme ultimate. Tai chi incorporates the Eastern concepts of yin and yang (synergistic forces within the body) and qi (vital energy or life force). Practicing tai chi supports a healthy balance of yin and yang, thereby improving the flow of qi. As practitioners of Eastern medicine say: When the qi flows properly, so does the blood!

One might also find tai chi appealing because it is inexpensive, requires no special equipment and can be done indoors or out, either alone or in a group. In Eastern communities, people commonly practice tai chi in parks or open spaces – often in early morning before going to work. There are many different styles, but all involve slow, relaxed, graceful movements, each flowing into the next. The body is in constant motion. As one becomes more experienced, distracting thoughts lessen. This type of mental focus is much like meditation and will improve



one's overall mental functioning, especially concentration and focus.

Tai chi is suited for anyone at any age or fitness level. In fact, the Oregon Research Institute in Eugene recently conducted a study that found adults over age 65, who had the lowest fitness levels, improved the most by doing tai chi twice a week. Tai chi is low impact and puts minimal stress on muscles and joints, making it generally safe for all ages and fitness levels. Because tai chi is low impact, it may be especially suitable for older adults who otherwise may not exercise.

## Support for Tai Chi

Tai chi can reduce stress and depression, and also relieve pain, build strength and improve cognitive function, perhaps even delaying dementia, says Peter M. Wayne, Ph.D., Director of Research at the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

The practice is a mental and physical centering, says tai chi master Yang Yang, Ph.D., founder and director of the Center for Taiji and Qigong Studies in New York City, where he teaches what he terms Evidence Based Taiji.

### ► Fall prevention

One of the most supported benefits – and the one backed by the most evidence thus far – is in its capacity to improve balance and prevent falls. Tai chi strengthens weak muscles in legs and improves the ability of ankles to flex on uneven surfaces – and repeated movements improve reaction time. All of these help prevent falls. Tai chi also significantly increases core strength, which is important for improving balance, and enhances our ability to use information from the inner ear, which is a key aspect of maintaining balance.

### ► Cognitive aid

Studies show that among people with early dementia or mild cognitive impairment, exercises such as tai chi can have positive effects on cognitive performance and memory.

### ► Immunity Booster

Tai chi may improve immune function. One study showed that seniors had a better immune reaction to flu vaccine after practicing tai chi for five months.

### ► Cancer help

Tai chi benefits cancer survivors. It does not cure cancer, but restores function, strength and energy, helps people better cope with symptoms and improves resiliency.

Although tai chi is generally safe, women who are pregnant or people with joint problems, back pain, fractures, severe osteoporosis or a hernia should consult their health care provider before trying tai chi. Modification or avoidance of certain postures may be recommended.

For more information on tai chi, please visit the National Institutes of Health's website at [nih.gov](http://nih.gov) or contact your local health and fitness centers to inquire about classes in your area. §

*Karman S. Gossett is an acupuncture intern at the Jung Tao School of Classical Chinese Medicine, and she practices tai chi daily. She can be reached at [rivertown.massagetherapy.com](http://rivertown.massagetherapy.com) or [karmangossett@gmail.com](mailto:karmangossett@gmail.com).*

## Some of the reported benefits of **Tai Chi** include:

- Prevention of falls
- Improving balance
- Reduction of pain
- Strengthening of the immune system
- Easing of stress and depression
- Increasing bone density
- Lessening Parkinson's disease symptoms



# BBB SCAM WATCH...

## Protect Your Identity: Don't Get Phished!

*By Kathy Graham, President/CEO  
Better Business Bureau, Coastal Carolina Inc.*



### *It's Cyber Security Awareness Month.*

### *Do you know how to protect your identity online?*

“Phishing” – the act of targeting victims via email in the hopes of spreading viruses and gathering personal information – can happen to anyone. Cybercriminals have become quite savvy in their attempts to lure people into clicking on links or opening phony email attachments. Online phishing attacks can not only spread computer viruses, but they can pose a significant risk for identity theft.

Better Business Bureau has joined with the National Cyber Security Alliance's STOP. THINK. CONNECT. campaign to recommend the following tips to avoid falling for an email phishing scam:

Be on your toes. Only open emails, attachments and links from people you know. Use anti-virus software regularly and enhance email filters to block threats. Watch out for unsolicited emails that contain misspellings or grammatical errors.

Don't believe what you see. It's easy to steal the colors, logos and header of an established organization. Scammers can also make links look like they lead to legitimate websites, and make emails appear to come from a different sender.

Avoid sharing. Don't reveal personal or financial information in an email, and do not respond to email solicitations for this information. This includes following links sent in email. Be wary of any urgent instructions to take specified action such as “Click on the link or your account will be closed.”

Pay attention to a website's URL. Hover over any links to see where they lead. Malicious websites may look identical to a legitimate site, but the URL may use a variation in spelling or a different – but similar – domain.

If you are unsure whether an email request is legitimate, try to verify it by contacting the company directly. Contact the company using information provided on an account statement, not information provided in an email. Information about known phishing attacks is available online from groups such as the Anti-Phishing Working Group. Report phishing to APWG.

Keep a clean machine. Having the latest operating system, software, web browsers, anti-virus protection and apps are the best defenses against viruses, malware and other online threats.

For more information you can trust, visit **bbb.org**.

For more tips from the STOP. THINK. CONNECT campaign, visit [staysafeonline.org](http://staysafeonline.org). This material was developed in coordination with the STOP. THINK. CONNECT. campaign of the National Cyber Security Alliance.

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*Kathy Graham, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau, Coastal Carolina, Inc., can be reached at 843-488-0238, fax 843-488-0998 or email at [kathygraham@sc.rr.com](mailto:kathygraham@sc.rr.com).*

# Ah-h-h-h! Take me away!

After having read an article in a professional builders magazine about how showers instead of bathtubs in new homes appear to be the choice of new home buyers, *PrimeTimes* staff read a book review of a new book, "The Bath Solution" by Carolyn Bessette, M.D.

Bessette states that baths are very important and should be a part of everyone's health maintenance routine and she writes about "how to get the most from a 20-minute soak..." and proceeds with instructions for preparing the bath. She writes how the bath is "For the Mind" and "For the Body."

According to Bessette, the water should be "comfortably warm," but the temperature varies by each person, up to being hot. She cautions that hot baths aren't advised for pregnant women or for people with heart conditions and/or high blood pressure since hot water raises heart rate and could be harmful.

"For the Mind" – Being submerged in your comfortable tub is a great place to get away from it all. You'll not be bothered by anyone after you've announced you are going to take a bath. It's difficult to multitask while soaking in the tub so it's a perfect place to be still, and just being there is "relaxation." It brings balance and a feeling of calm and you can think of "nothing at all except being there..."

"For the Body" – Being in the comfort of your tub can ease sore, tense muscles; soften skin; reduce fatigue; and help a person get better sleep. For easing muscles, two cups of Epsom salt can be added to the water. The salt is made of magnesium and sulfate, and the magnesium can be absorbed through capillaries and eases the muscles.

For skin, Bessette says benefits can be derived from simple additives:

- Sea salt (one to two cups) can gently exfoliate the skin, making it clean and smooth.
- Apple cider vinegar (one to two cups) is an astringent, an antifungal and antibacterial, and may temper poison ivy or sunburn.
- Baking soda (two to three cups) can ease burning, stinging or itching from skin conditions such as dermatitis or insect bites.

If you are interested in learning more about the subject, check the website.

*Carolyn Bessette, M.D., worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 15 years and now devotes her time to educating about the healing benefits of the bath. She is the founder of BathRX and her website is **BathRX.com**.*



Why is our sodium intake so high – averaging more than 1,000 mg/day higher than upper level recommendations? Adding salt to foods is an inexpensive way to improve the sensory properties of food. Those who are accustomed to high levels of salt in their diet may begin to believe foods that are not salty taste bad. Even if you do not frequently use the salt shaker, you are still at risk of consuming too much sodium as more than 75 percent of the sodium we eat is from processed foods. The high levels of salt in processed foods have made the shift to a lower sodium diet very difficult. In fact, a few years ago the Institute of Medicine issued a report that noted that for more than 40 years educational and awareness campaigns in our country aimed to reduce sodium intake have not been successful.

A few examples of sodium in processed foods include:

- 1 tablespoon of ketchup (190 mg)
- slice of American cheese slice (277 mg)
- 1/12 of devil's food cake with icing (500 mg)
- whole dill pickle (800 mg)
- ¼ cup of tomato sauce (410 mg)
- serving of chocolate instant pudding (420 mg)
- and a small pancake (200 mg)

Even more concerning are the high rates of sodium in foods prepared away from home.

Examples of these include:

- Original recipe chicken breast at Kentucky Fried Chicken (1130 mg)
- McDonalds Big Mac (930 mg)
- Wendy's Small Chili (870 mg)
- Hardee's Sausage Biscuit (1,150 mg).

Since rates of eating away from home are higher than ever, our sodium intake is proportionately increasing as well.



### Why should our sodium levels be lower?

High sodium intake is well known for detrimental health effects on the human body. According to the American Heart Association, lowering sodium intake can reduce cardiovascular disease, stroke and kidney disease. Elevated blood pressure is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in our country. Blood pressure generally rises with increases in sodium consumption and age. In fact, about 90 percent of adults in our country become hypertensive as they age. High blood pressure damages the walls of the arteries and causes microscopic tears that turn into scar tissue and provides a lodging site for cholesterol and other substances that are collectively referred to as plaque. These plaques that can build up in our arterial walls are the main culprits for heart disease.

How might changes in dietary habits lower blood pressure? One research finding that continues to stand true is the importance of including ample amounts of grains, fruits and vegetables in the diet to reduce blood pressure. Earlier in 2013 the *U.S. News & World Report* gave top honors for best overall diet to the DASH diet – the acronym for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The DASH eating plan is not a weight-loss program, but those who follow this “diet” eat healthier and often shed pounds. The diet is heavy on vegetables and fruits and light on salt, sugar and saturated fat.



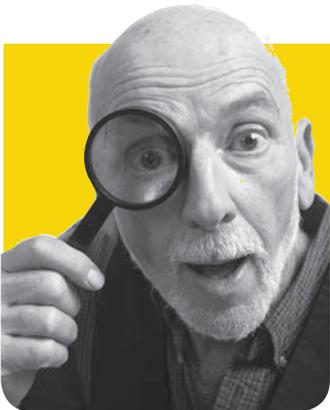
The DASH Eating Plan includes:

- 6-8 servings of grains a day
- 4-5 servings of vegetables a day
- 4-5 servings of fruits a day
- 2-3 servings of fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products
- 6 oz. or less of lean meats, poultry or fish a day
- 4-5 servings of nuts, seeds and legumes per week
- 2-3 servings of fats and oils per day, and
- 5 or less servings of sweets or added sugar per week.

Those who follow the DASH diet generally increase their intake of mineral-rich foods that lower blood pressure – such as potassium, calcium, magnesium and fiber. The increase in the nutrients combined with controlling sodium intake has been found to have significant effects on blood pressure reductions.

In summary, research is currently being conducted to determine future recommendations on sodium intake. Until that time, continue to eat a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products because these foods provide essential minerals such as potassium, calcium, and magnesium which are essential for heart health and lower blood pressure. Try not to exceed the 2,300 mg/day of sodium recommendation. Ways to reduce sodium in the diet include limiting eating away from home, reducing processed food consumption, using spices and herbs blends rather than sodium in cooking, purchasing fresh, frozen or canned “with no salt added” vegetables, and using fresh poultry, fish and lean meat rather than processed or canned types. \$

*Sharon Thompson can be reached at [thompson@coastal.edu](mailto:thompson@coastal.edu).*



## Looking for VOLUNTEERS

**CCU's Department of Kinesiology, Recreation and Sport Studies is looking for individuals age 65 and older to participate in a study about balance, falls, functional performance and cognition.**

The study requires three or four visits to campus prior to beginning the six-week balance training programs. These first visits will not be longer than an hour. Before committing to the study, participants are asked to review an explanation of the entire project so that questions can be answered. Volunteers need to complete a series of balance and aerobic capacity tests along with questionnaires and tests related to health and cognition (brain function). Participants will be randomly assigned to perform six weeks of balance training using a Wii Fit Balance Board or Xbox Kinect video game. This study has been approved by the CCU Human Subjects Research Committee.

If you are interested and would like more information about the study, please contact one of the people listed below.

**Greg Martel, Ph.D.**

843-349-2957 or [gmartel@coastal.edu](mailto:gmartel@coastal.edu)

**Lisa Barella, Ph.D.**

843-349-4184 or [lbarella@coastal.edu](mailto:lbarella@coastal.edu)

**Stacey Beam**

843-349-2807 or [sbeam@coastal.edu](mailto:sbeam@coastal.edu)

# Are YOU an *Ecological* Detective?

By James O. Luken, Associate Provost, Director of Graduate Studies, Coastal Carolina University

## How good are you at interpreting the landscape?

Look carefully at the photograph and see if you can answer the following questions. The Internet and careful observation are your most useful tools. The winner will be named in the next issue of *PrimeTimes*.

### Some hints:

- The picture was taken not too far from Myrtle Beach.
- The place has been photographed by others.
- Everything you see has a name.

### And now the questions...

### The easy ones:

1. Where was this photograph taken? Be specific.
2. What species of carnivorous plant is most visible?
3. What other small carnivorous plant is likely there but hidden?

### Now things get a little more difficult:

4. Why are there no trees in the foreground?
5. Who (an entity) manages this area?
6. Who (a person) knows more about this area than anyone else?

### And finally, the bonus question:

7. How do you know that people were here? §

Send your answers to: [joluken@coastal.edu](mailto:joluken@coastal.edu)



# Snacking

## A Diet Pitfall or Savior?

By Larissa Gedney, MS, RD, LD  
Clinical Nutrition Manager  
Conway Medical Center

Snacking can be an important part of anyone's diet, particularly children and adolescents who need extra calories for growth and development. It may even help promote weight loss. On the other hand, snacking can also break a diet

if it results in eating more calories than would normally be consumed from meals alone. The types of foods chosen as snacks also play a part in the benefits of noshing between meals.

Here are some snack ideas that come in around 100-calories each.

- 3 ½ cups air-popped popcorn
- 1 medium apple or banana
- 2 squares graham crackers with 1 teaspoon peanut butter
- ½ cup canned peaches or pears (in its own juice) with ¼ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/3 cup boiled, shelled edamame
- 6 baby carrots with 3 tablespoons hummus
- ½ cup light yogurt with 2 tablespoons slivered almonds

Choosing healthful snacks and planning to include them appropriately throughout your day can be beneficial to a well-balanced diet. Snacks can help reduce hunger and eliminate binging when included in a healthy diet. A small piece of fresh fruit or some veggie sticks before going to a dinner party or out to a restaurant can curb hunger just enough to prevent overindulging. Speak with your local dietitian or health care provider to help you individualize a meal plan that includes snacks that works for you. §

Larissa Gedney can be reached at  
Conway Medical Center at 843-347-8242.



For years, we have been programmed to believe that the healthiest eating plan involves three square meals a day. But more and more research and diet trends suggest that eating more frequently, albeit with smaller portions, may promote weight loss better than eating just three meals daily.

One theory that suggests eating more frequent, calorie-controlled meals or snacks is that it increases your body's resting metabolic rate, which allows your body to burn off more calories for basic non-exercising functions, such as breathing and digesting. Another theory suggests that nibbling throughout the day gives people a better sense of feeling satisfied after eating and less hungry overall. In addition, you may be less likely to overeat at the next meal because severe hunger will be kept at bay. Some individuals who skip meals may be so famished by the time they get to their next meal, that they overeat and consume more calories than normal, or they may be more likely to eat the first thing they can get their hands on, resulting in a greater likelihood they will make poor food choices.

In a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, men who consumed a "nibbling" diet, which consisted of 17 small snacks during the day instead of three larger meals, had lower blood cholesterol levels than those men in the study who consumed the same number of calories but by eating three larger meals a day. Lower cholesterol levels may contribute to a decreased risk for heart disease, suggesting that the nibbling diet may be beneficial to not only weight control, but also heart health. Other studies that have surveyed dieters about the frequency and sizes of meals often have found that those who ate smaller meals more frequently tended to weigh less.



# The Leaves Turn...

*By Victoria Alana Huggins  
BA English, MA Writing, Coastal Carolina University*



It is mid-October, a dark and slightly chilly fall evening in Myrtle Beach, S.C. A granddaughter of 23 years of age is with her grandmother on a Saturday night. They are attending the Long Bay Symphony Pops concert featuring special guest Chris Mann. At 82, the grandmother is excited to be with her only grandchild for a night on the town as opposed to staying at home and reading a book or watching television. It doesn't get much better for her than this. The excitement in her voice is hard to ignore.

The granddaughter, on the other hand, doesn't seem all that enthused. See, she had just been broken up with the week before. She tries to put on a jolly mask, but there is something that just will not allow her to fully enjoy the evening. She is haunted by "oldies" love songs when she and her grandmother eat at the local Fuddrucker's restaurant, nibbling on All-American burgers and crispy, salty fries. She does not want to listen to the melodies of summer love.

By the time dinner is over, it is a rush to get to the concert. Panic is all the granddaughter feels for a moment as she realizes that grandmother may have lost their tickets. They have to be in the car...or her purse. I just saw them. A quick trip to the car and five minutes later proves that, indeed, the tickets are in grandmother's purse, and the show begins just as they are seated.

Looking around, granddaughter notices that she is among the youngest members of the audience. She notices this but is still distracted by her own troubled mind. The symphony opens the show with a medley of Duke Ellington tunes, and soon Chris Mann makes an appearance. The singer captures the audience, including grandmother. Each person is eating out of the palm of his hand, hanging on to every word and laughing at his jokes.

Before the first half of the show is finished, Chris Mann shares with his audience that he is a newly married man and fell in love while on tour. He asks, "Have you ever been in love?" The crowd swoons, especially the women. Granddaughter notices that there are tears in grandmother's eyes. They are happy tears because to accompany the tears is a smile and the words, "Oh, yes," which comes out in a high pitched, girlish squeal. Suddenly the absence of an older man, a late husband, a grandfather, is felt. Tears swell in granddaughter's eyes too, but instead of reflecting on her own sadness for once, she is amazed at how her grandmother is reflecting on the great love that she once felt. She once had a love of her life, and he has now been gone for 11 years. It's a long time to go without someone she was married to for more than 50 years.

Other couples simply look at each other, grateful to still have each other in older age. Granddaughter reaches for grandmother's hand, her soft, smooth hand grasping a wrinkled, weary hand. The two listen to the song, "Falling," and share a sense of loss and heartbreak. During intermission, the granddaughter has a strong sense of déjà vu, and grandmother laughs because she can't remember ever hearing of such a word. By the end of the show, each is refreshed by the live music and the tinkling of instruments. They walk out to the car, arm-in-arm, and there is a sense of hope. A hope that love does indeed survive and broken hearts may always sting, but never stay completely shattered. The cold air reminds granddaughter and grandmother that time does indeed pass by, things change, but love remains the same. "I think I want some ice cream," says the elder.

"That sounds perfect to me," replies the younger. §

*Victoria Alana Huggins first appeared in the Summer 2012 issue of PrimeTimes with "Poppy, My True American Idol."  
She is a 2011 CCU graduate and can be reached at [alana@sccoast.net](mailto:alana@sccoast.net).*



WINTER/SPRING 2014

# Lifelong Learning

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- ▶ Enjoy free lectures and demonstrations of courses and clubs.
- ▶ Access our website and online WebAdvisor.
- ▶ Register for OLLI membership, classes, parking permits.
- ▶ Discover cultural and wellness benefits of OLLI membership.

The printed course catalog are available at the three outreach centers.

**Myrtle Beach Education Center**

▶ **FREE WEEK activities:**

Tuesday, Jan. 7

843-349-2767

**Litchfield Education Center**

▶ **FREE WEEK activities:**

Wednesday, Jan. 8

843-349-6584

**Coastal Science Center**

▶ **FREE WEEK activities:**

Thursday, Jan. 9

843-349-5002

For more information, addresses and directions to the outreach centers, or to receive the weekly newsletter by email: [olli@coastal.edu](mailto:olli@coastal.edu)

Course descriptions are available online at: [coastal.edu/olli](http://coastal.edu/olli)

## OLLI – Lifelong Learning at CCU...

The Division of Academic Outreach at Coastal Carolina University will be starting the Winter 2014 session in January. OLLI provides the best in adult education throughout the Grand Strand with more than 350 courses offered during day and evening hours.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) is funded in part by the Bernard Osher Foundation. Since 2007, OLLI at CCU has received \$350,000 from the Osher Foundation to assist with operating expenses. In 2013, OLLI at CCU received a \$1 million endowment; the interest from which can be used to fund program initiatives. Further funding is conditioned upon the

development and implementation of OLLI at CCU's fundraising strategies for sustainability. Through Osher's grant program, there are 117 OLLIs on university and colleges in all 50 states and D.C. OLLI at CCU has a board of volunteer leaders started in the spring of 2012 that assists the OLLI mission "to provide opportunities for older adult noncredit students to achieve intellectual stimulation, as well as cultural and social growth, while fostering a close, lasting and mutually beneficial relationship between the students and the university."

OLLI courses are offered at three convenient locations, on campus in Conway, Litchfield and Myrtle Beach. There is an OLLI "Free Week" January 7-9, 2014. For more details check [coastal.edu/olli](http://coastal.edu/olli).

## PrimeTimes wants to hear from YOU!

If you have comments or questions about articles in this issue, want to submit a letter to the editor, ask a question or make a comment, or if you would like to suggest appropriate subjects for consideration in future issues, the *PrimeTimes* staff wants to hear from you. If you want to be added to the *PrimeTimes* mailing list, just email, call, fax or write to let us know. Previous issues of *PrimeTimes* can be viewed at [coastal.edu/lifespan](http://coastal.edu/lifespan).

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things – the best things - and they were all good, every bit of them, in every sense of the word.

On one particular summertime weekend, our Saturday night sleepover turned into a full blown Sunday dinner. My mother fried chicken, made homemade cat head biscuits, rice and gravy – and said the only things missing were a few fresh tomatoes, cucumbers and squash (to be fried, of course) from the garden.

So, off I went to plunder the garden – a garden tended by my Uncle Edsel. I traveled the long sandy dirt road canopied by the ever so thickening greenery of the tall Southern pines, gnarly with age. I have walked many a mile on that same dirt path with my Granddaddy and, oh the treasures to be enjoyed along the way.

Along the winding road, I passed the old chicken coop where the rooster that hated my bright red shirt once lived just before my Granddaddy axed him for jumping up on my shoulder and pecking through my hair. There was the pecan tree where I used to fill my Grandma's Winnie the Pooh apron pockets quite full so that we could sit for hours on the back porch and pick those pecans clean because they were so darn good on top of a chocolate cake that my cousins Mike and Doug loved so much. There was the pear tree I used to climb, the canal ditch where my Granddaddy found the gator, yes a real one, and the corn crib that

was home to a few rats the size of full grown Tom cats. Then there was the pack house with the steep narrow stairs and the tractor shed where we used to follow the slivering snake tracks in the sand. All this led to a piece of dirt that opened up to Uncle Edsel's beloved garden.

I remember the rows being so long. Surfacing memories of my Mama and Grandma sitting on buckets and picking butter beans up and down those long rows now come to mind. We'd take them home to shell in my Granddaddy's bean sheller – and sit right there, watching

those beans pour out into that pan, wondering how on Earth that machine was doing that.

Hungry and ready for that Sunday dinner, I saw so many squash and so many cucumbers, and I remember being so thankful I brought a big brown grocery sack to fill. No need to leave any to rot. I slipped my shoes off at the end of the row, and I felt the dirt underneath my feet, damp and cool from the soft rain we had the night before. And I picked and picked and picked on that Sunday morning until the bag got so heavy I could no longer lift it. I began to drag it and fill, drag it and fill, drag it and fill.

Way down that row, that long, long row, I stood up and wiped a bit of sweat from a cheek and reached down again, brushing back the squash bush so I could better see, and my hand spanned across a beautifully coiled snake, enjoying the luxury of the Sunday shade. From that shady spot, he lifted his pointed head and perked it up in my direction a bit. Now, I'm no snake expert but if memory serves me right that snake was coiled up into about six or seven circles. He's what my husband calls a "grown 'un."

Looking back, I'm sure he had the name King or Stud or Bubba among his snake posse. I didn't take the time to take a second look, but I know for a fact he was glaring at me – this head of his the size of a grown man's fist, and just daring me to run. So I took old Bubba's dare and I high stepped it out of that garden,

knees to chest with each step; it's always the way you feel when you see a snake. We've all been there – as we assume there's another two or three or 15 around. I forgot my brown grocery sack, left my shoes and jumped those long, long rows, rushed past that tractor shed, the corn crib, the canal ditch, the pear tree, the pecan tree, and the chicken coop, right up to the porch steps and into the kitchen.

So we ate our fine Sunday dinner with no fried squash, no fresh cucumber slices, no sliced tomatoes, and I added the sight of that snake to my long list of memories of that sandy dirt road covered by the canopy of summertime greenery from the old gnarly pines.

But even so, snake and all, that place with its bountiful garden, the aprons, the cool sheets and old quilts with the windows raised at night, old porch rockers, an old Chevy truck, and the most colorful people in the world was special, is special, and has become as much a part of me as anything I know.

I constantly challenge myself, and I challenge you, after a long day at work, in your fast-paced, fun-filled world, where technology and getting in touch never takes a break, to just sit still for a while. Soak it all in. Take the deep breath. Listen to God speak. He will do it through the colors you see, the scents you smell, the hugs you get and the mud puddles you walk through. Find your place. Any place. Claim it. Make it yours. And with reckless abandon, make it count.

*Bridgette Johnson is a PrimeTimes pioneer contributor and a favorite of PT readers. Her writing is sure to encourage us to think of home, of growing up, of parents and siblings and grandparents and old friends and old stories, school days and maybe even old romances. As stated in earlier issues of PrimeTimes, Bridgette is the Horry Home Companion, bringing life alive with tales – not “tall,” but true and heartfelt. Bridgette is a gardener as well as a writer, sowing seeds for blooming and thinking. Previous articles can be found at [coastal.edu/lifespan](http://coastal.edu/lifespan), click on PrimeTimes.*





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## PrimeTimes

WINTER 2013

# PrimeTimes

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE • OFFICE OF LIFESPAN STUDIES • COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

### SMILE-A-WHILE

*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.*

A group of **40**-year old friends discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View Restaurant because the wait staff there is friendly and efficient.

Ten years later, at **50** years of age, the group, once again, discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed they should meet at the Ocean View Restaurant because the food there was very good and the wine selection was good also.

Ten years later, at **60** years of age, the group once again discussed and agreed they should meet at the Ocean View Restaurant because they could eat there in peace and quiet and the restaurant had a beautiful view of the ocean.

Ten years later, at **70** years of age, the group again discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed they should meet at the Ocean View Restaurant because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible and had an elevator.

Ten years later, at **80** years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for dinner. Finally, it was agreed they should meet at the Ocean View Restaurant because they'd never been there before.