



November , 2018

Newsletter

News and information for the friends of the Vegetarian Cooking Classes at CCAS from the Forrester's Beach Seventh-day Adventist Health and Wellbeing Team

Our Purpose

- to help you achieve optimum health and wellbeing.
- to present helpful information about balanced eating, keeping disease at bay and enjoying a long and fulfilling life
- to provide you with new tasty plant-based recipes and help you cook them

What's on this month?

How to Stay Healthy through the Holidays

Pavlova! Fruit cake! Candy Canes! Do those foods get you a bit worried about putting on weight and being unhealthy over the holidays? The average weight gain for the holidays is about 500g. BUT the problem is that we usually don't lose it and it adds up year after year **No need to fear**. Marcia's talk will provide us with some sensible ways to navigate the territory.

On the Menu: Bring a Plate

Tex-Mex Pizza Watermelon Pizza
Walnut and Mushroom Nut Roast
Lentil and Vegetable Lettuce Cups
Herb-Crusted Peppercorn Lentil-Nut Pâté
Club Sandwiches with Sweet Potato Chips

Details

- Monday 26 November at 6:45pm for 7:00pm
- Central Coast Adventist School, Penrose Cr, Erina, Food Tech room
- \$15 per night
- Bookings necessary for each class
- Phone Cheryl on 0403848242 or 43259213 or email cheryl011148@gmail.com



2019!

We anticipate continuing the classes on the last Monday of each month again in the new year.

That means our first one for the year would be on 25 February.

We also hope to run some other interesting health and well-being seminars as well so watch this space for some other great opportunities.

The Surprising Factor that Promotes Longevity

What is it that brings true joy and fulfilment in life? Is it a good job or a new car? Is it family and friends? Even amidst friends, family and material possessions, many people are left lonely and unfulfilled. We have heard a lot from the medical field about physical health, mental health, and our social connections, but the effect of spirituality on health is often overlooked or dismissed. However, these four dimensions (physical, mental, social, and spiritual) are aspects of life that need to be brought into balance in order for our lives to be as rewarding as possible.

So, what affect does religion or spirituality have on a person's well being? Besides the purely spiritual benefits, does connecting with a higher power benefit us in our earthly, physical lives? Followers of all religions often claim their faith is an important part of their health and well-being.

Sceptics often scoff at the notion that faith influences health; arguing that it is the social interaction the religious community provides, not the religion or faith itself, which boosts wellness. But religious groups do not deny the effect of community on their lives. Many would say God intended religion to promote community; when people gather together to worship or pray, a way is provided to meet both spiritual and social needs.

The, "strong positive relation between religiosity and well-being," appears to hold true regardless of the number of people in each spiritual community.^[1] For example, very religious Jews are a minority within their ethnic community. However, they still experience the same boost in well-being when compared to the larger groups of moderately religious and non-religious Jews.^[2]

But we are not simply talking about mental or social well-being; faith actually has an effect on our physical lives and longevity. 'Blue zones' is a geographic designation given to groups of people who have had exceptionally long lifespans. Among these people, a common factor is trust in divine power. In the research, many centenarians (people who are over 100 years old) from these 'zones' were interviewed. In fact, ninety-eight percent of the centenarians interviewed in the Blue Zones study belonged to some type of faith-based community.^[3] In fact, attending faith-based services each week has been shown to add 4 to 14 years of life expectancy.^[4]

Americans who never attend church have 1.87 times the risk of death compared with those attending services more than once a week. For someone who is twenty years old, that amounts to a 7-year difference in life expectancy.^[5]

The question is, how much does this have to do with the lifestyles of those in question, and how much with actual faith?

How does this boost in longevity come about? Besides lifestyle, what medical effects does faith bring to the table? These questions are especially relevant; because, when people are sick, their spiritual beliefs are often more pronounced. They look to a higher power for support and for strength. One study showed that 77% of patients wanted their physicians to consider their spiritual needs and 48% wanted their physicians to pray with them.^[6]

These spiritual beliefs are not simply a crutch, they have been documented to help in numerous ways: "Results from several studies indicate that people with strong religious and spiritual beliefs heal faster from surgery, are less anxious and depressed, have lower blood pressure, and cope better with chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and spinal cord injury."^[7]

Lets look at some clinically documented examples of faith's relationship with healing. In a study of 232 heart surgery patients, "those who were religious were 3 times less likely to die within 6 months after surgery than those who were not."^[8] In fact, none of the patients who described themselves as deeply religious died. In addition to this, research in coronary (heart) care units suggests there is a benefit to intercessory prayer. The patients who were prayed for had fewer complications and fewer deaths than those who did not receive prayer.^[9]

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that depression patients who are treated with religious therapy recover faster than those treated with standard secular cognitive-behavioural therapy. Also, the patients treated with religious therapy had significantly lower post-treatment depression levels.^[10] People with AIDS who had, "faith in God, compassion toward others, a sense of inner peace, and were religious had a better chance of surviving for a long time than those who did not live with such belief systems."^[11]

Clearly, faith affects our lives and health in many ways. It has a far-reaching, deep impact upon more than our spiritual our well-being; it also affects our physical, mental, and social well-being. Being part of a faith-based community is an important piece of the longevity puzzle. If you have never done so before, consider submitting your life to God. By exercising faith, our lives can be more fulfilled, balanced and peaceful than before.

Written by Jonathan Ewald in the *Life and Health Network* website.