



# CULINARY MEDICINE WORKSHOPS

## LIVESTRONG AT THE Y CANCER SURVIVORSHIP PROGRAM

Dana Boler, Health Director

LA CROSSE AREA FAMILY YMCA

September 25, 2025

Culinary Medicine: Evidence-based field in medicine that blends the art of food and cooking with the science of medicine.

Food As Medicine: Refers to the concept that food can be used as a therapeutic tool to prevent, manage, and treat health conditions.

*"The food you eat can be either the safest  
and most powerful form of medicine, or the slowest form of poison."*

-Ann Wigmore

# Background

- In partnership with the Plant Partners Committee and Oncology Registered Dietitians from Emplify Health
- Started a 3-week pilot class in March of 2023 and have hosted 29+ Culinary Medicine Workshops and impacted about 450 people (and more with their families).
- Host a Culinary Medicine Workshop for every LIVESTRONG class at the Y and an annual STAYSTRONG alumni retreat (total of 10 classes each year).
- We receive a lot of feedback from LIVESTRONG participants wanting more information on nutrition.
- We are passionate about providing nutrition education to prevent cancer and cancer recurrence.
- We believe food is medicine and we showcase how to eat whole foods, plant-based. Our main goal is to promote eating more plants-fiber!



Dana Boler, Jill Wenthe, RD & Dr. Anna Kitzmann

# Interactive Workshops

- Host in our teaching kitchens at both of our Y branches
- All current LIVESTRONG and YOUTHSTRONG participants are invited, along with a support person
- Fun and interactive workshops focusing on sharing nutrition education, cooking tips, kitchen equipment suggestions, budget tips, meal planning, and Q & A's from participants.
- Focus on Whole Foods-Plant Based Diet
- Participants sample recipes if interested
- Provide a handout with other resources and recipes
- Offer our lending library resources (cookbooks and nutrition books)



# Seasonal Menus & Local Foods

- **Menus change with the season and we aim to get produce from local vendors when possible.**
  - Fall: Roasted vegetables, squash, sweet potatoes, baked apples
  - Winter: Soups and warm baked bread, baked oatmeal
  - Spring: Chickpea pastas, grain bowls, beet hummus, chia seed pudding, tofu
  - Summer: Greens and cold salad dishes, charcuterie style boards



Dr. Anna Kitzmann, Jill  
Wenthe, RD &  
Kayla Siple, RD

# Surveys & Participant Feedback

## Participant Feedback:

- "This is an eye-opener for cancer survivors AND their significant others. It was done in such an informative AND fun way, rather than "preaching" or making you feel like you are failing. We'll be talking about all that we learned for a LONG time."
- "I loved hearing about ways to bring more fiber in our diet, the focus on plant-based meals, and ways to use vegetables."
- "You made/make a difference in people's lives and offer something that some may not have been able to access."
- "Very grateful that this YMCA resource exists to support the community. As a brand-new cancer survivor, classes like this are meaningful and impactful. Inspiring!!"
- "This was such a fun positive class to enhance everyday life during cancer recovery. New foods presented in a manner that inspires one to really go home and eat healthy."
- "Huge thanks. Truly a gift for those of us who need to take better care of ourselves."
- **"Culinary Medicine Workshops should be a part of EVERY treatment journey."**

## Surveys:

- Every participant gets a survey at the end of the workshop
- Share feedback with funding and grant opportunities
- Get ideas for other education topics
- Learn what recipes they enjoyed
- Enjoy seeing how they plan to incorporate healthier eating into their lifestyle
- 97% of participants gave it 5/5 stars!



# Funding & Future

## Future Expansion:

- Expand to offer more nutrition education during treatment
- Create a nutrition lending library at the cancer center
- Emplify & Y collaborate to offer food deliveries during treatment
- Healthy snack options during treatment (vending machines and/or snack bar)
- Create a cookbook with our favorite recipes to use as a fundraiser
- Have funds to purchase foods and equipment for participants
- Offer virtual or hybrid option
- Record sessions and save them on a website
- Train in other Culinary Medicine Workshop Hosts/instructors
- Provide **FREE** Community Culinary Medicine Workshops for **ALL!**

## Funding:

- FREE for all
- Grants from Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative
- Funding from Gundersen Medical Foundation
- Support from All of Us Research
- Y's Annual Campaign







# Pumpkin Peanut Curry Bisque

## Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped (about 3/4 cup)
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small Yukon gold potato, peeled and cubed (1-inch cubes)
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and cubed (1-inch cubes)
- 3 tablespoons Thai red curry paste
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 1 cup water, plus more if needed
- 15-ounce can pumpkin puree
- 3 tablespoons smooth peanut butter
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Chopped fresh mint or cilantro, and roasted pumpkin seeds, to serve

## Instructions:

In a large saucepan over medium, heat the oil. Add the onion and cook until tender, but not brown, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, potato, apple and curry paste. Cook, stirring constantly, until the curry paste is very fragrant, about 3 minutes. Increase the heat to high, add the stock and 1 cup of water.

Once the liquid boils, reduce the heat to medium-low, partially cover the pan, then let the soup cook until the potato and apple are very tender, about 15 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and let cool slightly. Stir in the pumpkin and peanut butter. Working in batches, transfer the soup to a blender and puree until smooth, about 1 minute. The texture should be like heavy whipping cream. If the soup is too thick, whisk in a bit of water. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide between four serving bowls and top with mint, cilantro, or roasted pumpkin seeds.



# Kale Apple Salad with Cider Dressing

## Ingredients For the Cider Dressing:

- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 small garlic clove grated (or 1 tsp garlic powder)
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

## For the Salad:

- 1 bunch kale de-stemmed and chopped
- 1/2 bunch parsley chopped
- 1 honeycrisp apple diced or thinly sliced (or other apple of choice)
- 1/2 cup raw walnuts or pecans chopped
- Additional: pomegranate seeds
- Black pepper & sea salt to taste



## Instructions:

**Make the Dressing:** Add the oil, vinegar, maple syrup, mustard, garlic, and salt to a small mason jar. Seal the jar well and shake vigorously until emulsified, about 20 to 30 seconds.

**Massage:** Add the chopped kale to a large bowl and pour 3/4 of the dressing over it. Use clean hands to massage the dressing into the kale for 45 to 60 seconds, until the kale is tender and has reduced in volume.

**Mix:** Add the parsley, apple, and walnuts to the bowl with the kale and top with the remaining dressing, plus black pepper to taste. Use salad tongs or two large spoons to mix everything together well.

Serve as desired; leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days. Can make ahead of time.

# Pumpkin Chickpea Blondies



## Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup gluten-free oats
- 1 1/2 cups chickpeas (15 oz. can)
- 1/2 cup almond butter
- 1/3 cup canned pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp pumpkin spice
- 1/2 cup semi-sweet vegan chocolate chips

## Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a food processor add oats. Pulse until flour like substance.

Next add remaining ingredients: chickpeas, almond butter, canned pumpkin puree, maple syrup, vanilla, baking powder, baking soda, sea salt, and pumpkin spice. Blend to combine. Remove S-shape blade and add 1/4 cup chocolate chips. Fold into batter.

Line a square cake pan ( 9x9 inch) with parchment paper. Rub the sides with a bit of coconut oil. Pour batter into baking dish and spread to even. Sprinkle with remaining chocolate chips.

Bake blondies for 25-30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let rest for 10-15 minutes before cutting into squares.

# Pumpkin Spice Granola

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups gluten-free rolled oats
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 cup cashews or pecans, or other nut of choice
- 1/3 cup almond butter nut free options: sunflower butter, tahini
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/4 cup pumpkin purée
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or 1/2 vanilla bean
- 1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- pinch of salt



## Instructions:

Preheat your oven to 325 F while you prepare your granola ingredients.

In a large bowl, whisk together pumpkin, maple syrup, nut or seed butter, vanilla, spices and salt until smooth.

Next add oats, pumpkin seeds and cashews, and toss with a spatula until evenly coated.

Transfer mixture onto a baking mat lined baking tray and bake for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway through with a spatula. Remove once golden brown and baked through.

Let cool completely before storing.



# Resources

## Websites:

- Dr. Michael Greger  
<https://www.nutritionfacts.org>
- Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine  
<https://www.pcrm.org/health-topics/cancer>  
Check out their 21-day Vegan Kickstart program (free)
- World Cancer Research Fund  
<https://www.wcrf.org/diet-activity-and-cancer/cancer-prevention-recommendations/eat-wholegrains-vegetables-fruit-and-beans/>
- Forks Over Knives – A resource for eating more plants  
<https://www.forksoverknives.com/>
- T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies  
<https://nutritionstudies.org/>
- Full Plate Living (<https://www.fullplateliving.org/>)

## Book Recommendations:

- Michael Greger Books & Cookbooks
- Breasts: The Owner's Manual: Every Woman's Guide to Reducing Cancer Risk, Making Treatment Choices, and Optimizing Outcomes by Kristi Funk
- A Plant Powered Approach to Prostate Cancer by Bruce Mylrea, Mindy Mylrea
- Fiber Fueled: The Plant-Based Gut Health Program for Losing Weight, Restoring Your Health, and Optimizing Your Microbiome by Will Bulsiewicz MD
- Undo It!: How Simple Lifestyle Changes Can Reverse Most Chronic Diseases Paperback by Dean Ornish MD and Anne Ornish
- The Whole Foods Diet: The Lifesaving Plan for Health and Longevity by John Mackey, Alona Pulde MD, Matthew Lederman MD
- What's Missing from Medicine: Six Lifestyle Changes to Overcome Chronic Illness by Saray Stancic, MD
- Disease Reversal Hope!: Real People. Real Stories by Dan Purjes and Scott Stoll MD

# FOOD IS MEDICINE!

## Thank you!

## Questions?

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