

gSDA NEWSLETTER

THE GRADUATE STUDENT DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

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WHITE COAT CEREMONY PREPARATIONS

Jacquelyn Klunk, CMD Year 1

The first-year CMD students had a blast getting ready for the upcoming White Coat Ceremony at the February gSDA meeting! With the help of our post-baccalaureate members, first year students were able to try on sample white coats to find the perfect size. Jessica Murray, a senior in the undergraduate dietetics program, graciously agreed to take professional headshots of the students to be used during the ceremony. GSDA and the first-year CMD students are all excited to take part in the inaugural CMD White Coat Ceremony!



Christine and Lori find their perfect fit



Laura tries on a white coat



Abbey has her photo taken for the ceremony

THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Therezia Alchoufete, CMD Year 1

The Mediterranean Diet has pretty much won the award for MVP of Heart-Healthy Diets this past year, and there is plenty of research suggesting that it is associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. This includes a decreased prevalence of risk factors such as high blood pressure, arterial inflammation, and increased body weight. However, I have lived the “Mediterranean Diet” my whole life, so I would argue that this is not just a diet, but a lifestyle. The reason this plan is so successful is not just because it is packed with fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats. It is because the lifestyle in itself encourages stress-relieving activities such as family dinners, meals that last longer than 10 minutes, and exercising regularly.

The diet is characterized by certain features that stem from the traditions of the Mediterranean regions. These include the daily incorporation of fruits, vegetables, whole wheat grains, olive oil, nuts, beans, legumes, seeds, herbs, and spices. Fish is also eaten often, and moderate portions of eggs and dairy are included. Meats and sweets are enjoyed occasionally as well, along with a small amount of red wine. Physical activity and family meals are a key part of the diet, and they create a lifestyle that mimics the seemingly stress-free environment of the villages surrounding the Mediterranean coast.

Among the many heart-healthy benefits I mentioned above, this diet offers antioxidants that combat the aging caused by stress or pollution. The anti-inflammatory properties are great for reducing the risk of atherosclerosis as well as cancer. Furthermore, when combined with portion control and exercise, the Mediterranean Diet can allow for long-term weight loss and maintenance.

As an additional bonus, this diet is very easy to follow and has some delicious food options, eliminating the negative connotation associated with “dieting” and encouraging a well-balanced lifestyle.



A small example of food items within the Mediterranean Diet.

Items included are Tabouli, Hummus, Stuffed Grape Leaves, a fresh salad with mint, garlic, lemon dressing, and Whole-Wheat Bread with Zaatar (oregano paste)

All photos are my own.

Selena Hasircoglu, CMD Year 1

What are functional foods and what is functional medicine? According to the Institute of Functional Medicine, “Functional Medicine addresses the underlying causes of disease, using a systems-oriented approach and engaging both patient and practitioner in a therapeutic partnership. It is an evolution in the practice of medicine that better addresses the healthcare needs of the 21st century. By shifting the traditional disease-centered focus of medical practice to a more patient-centered approach, Functional Medicine addresses the whole person, not just an isolated set of symptoms.” It is the answer to the shortcomings of an acute care approach to treating chronic diseases. Functional foods are foods that when prepared, confer certain health benefits specific to the bioactive food substances in the food.

Since the beginning of the semester, students in Dr. Hutcheson’s functional foods course have been preparing meals in the food lab that feature a different bioactive food substance each week. We started with fiber and made different versions of hummus. If you haven’t tried avocado or beet hummus, you must! Our next lab was on nitrates and nitrites. You might know that beets are high in nitrates, a nitric oxide precursor in our food that has a long list of touted health benefits. To make nitrate rich dishes, we prepared beet chips, broccoli salad, a beet top salad, and celery soup. Because nitric oxide is converted by bacteria in the saliva, we used Berkeley test strips to test our nitric oxide levels before the nitrate rich meal, after the meal, and after rinsing our mouths. After the nitrate rich meal, our levels of nitrates increased! Our next lab was based on carotenoid-containing foods. For this lab, we made chickpea and spinach tacos, pico de gallo, butternut squash queso, and roasted carrot tacos with carrot green cilantro chimichurri. For the latest lab, which was based on herbs and spices, I selected recipes that would highlight specific flavors and benefits. We had a fresh herb dip, where herbs are crushed, chopped and blended into goat cheese. We made “turmeric tea,” also called golden milk due to the vibrant yellow pigment of the turmeric spice. We had spiced parsnip cupcakes which featured cardamom, a great spice alternative to the typical cinnamon used in dessert recipes. We also made a lemongrass coconut soup, using fresh lemongrass to add vibrant flavor to a smooth coconut vegetable broth.

For more information on functional foods, check out the Institute of Functional Medicine website at: <https://www.functionalmedicine.org/>



UPMC MAGEE WOMEN'S HOSPITAL - LACTATION ROTATION

Lori Hovis, CMD Year 1

I always had an interest in prenatal and maternal dietetics, so my junior year in the undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics program, I completed an independent study at the Lactation Center located in Magee-Womens Hospital. I enjoyed helping the lactation consultants so much that when my independent study was finished, I continued to volunteer there for two years. The staff was appreciative to have extra help in their store, and I was able to gain a wealth of knowledge about breastfeeding through this experience.

Once I started the Masters program, I no longer had time to volunteer at the Lactation Center, so I was thrilled when I heard that we would have a community rotation at Magee-Womens Hospital. Grace Hudak was the lead lactation consultant for this rotation. She explained to us her responsibilities as a Board Certified Lactation Consultant, showed us an informative video on breastfeeding, and gave us a tour of the Lactation Center. This store, which is where I volunteered, is where women are able to purchase supplies they need for breastfeeding, as well as rent hospital grade electric pumps. It is a resource for women to ask general questions about breastfeeding, schedule outpatient consultations, or where women can go who need support so they are able to successfully breastfeed. As we were getting ready to leave the rotation, Grace mentioned that anybody who was interested could job shadow one of the lactation consultants. I took advantage of this opportunity because of my passion for prenatal and maternal dietetics.

Magee-Womens Hospital is a wonderful atmosphere for job shadowing because it has a diverse population of patients. I shadowed for four hours and in that amount of time I was able to observe a variety of cases, including a mother with twins and a mother who was in a high risk situation after her C-section, but was still determined to breastfeed. The lactation consultant I job shadowed stated that 80% of women who are discharged from the hospital are actively breastfeeding. To keep this number high, the center provides ongoing breastfeeding education to their medical and nursing staff. They also offer prenatal breastfeeding classes to the public. These classes are highly encouraged because many new moms find that breastfeeding is not as "natural" as they thought it would be, or run into unforeseen complications. The lactation consultants at Magee-Womens Hospital work hard to assist mothers who make the decision to breastfeed in any way they can because of the unbelievable benefits it has for both the mother and baby.

PHIPPS LUNCH AND LEARN

Rachael Solomon, CMD Year 1

If you ever have the chance to volunteer at Phipps conservatory, do it! The people there are wonderful to work with. On February 28th, a group of graduate students had the opportunity to present a "lunch and learn" event. With February being heart health month, our lunch and learn focused on the Mediterranean diet and physical activity. We discussed the components of the Mediterranean diet, where the main focus was on fruits, vegetables, fish, seafood and healthy fats. Not only did we discuss the recommended amount of physical activity for adults, but we included some simple exercises for the employees, such as desk exercises and stretching that could all be performed in an office setting. A healthy snack was provided and we let the audience know the nutritional benefits. Overall the event was a success, the employees had a great time and there were great questions at the end. Working in the community is such a wonderful experience - being able to share our passion for nutrition and encouraging others to live a "healthy" lifestyle is what keeps us motivated. If we can help just one person a day learn one new thing about nutrition, our goal for the day is complete and we can move on to helping someone new the next day.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Welcome to the spring semester! If you aren't a member yet, email us at gSDAphg@gmail.com to join this spring. Current members, look out for emails from gSDA for volunteer opportunities.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

FOLLOW **PITTSHRS** ON SNAPCHAT TO SEE WHAT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CMD STUDENT IS LIKE!

See what it's like to be a student in
Nutrition & Dietetics

Hi, I'm Therezia!



Follow me as I takeover the SHRS
Snapchat account on Mon. April 3rd!



Keep a look out in your emails for different gSDA-related activities for the Spring Semester!

MEET THE GSDA

President

Therezia Alchoufete

Vice President

Jacquelyn Klunk

Business Manager

Kaleigh Talbert

Newsletter Editors

Therezia Alchoufete

&

Selena Hasircoglu

INTERESTED IN WRITING?

Contact us if you'd like to contribute an article to next month's newsletter! Content can include activities you've participated in through gSDA, service projects you're doing in the field of nutrition and dietetics, or informative blogs on current nutrition topics.

We'd love to hear from you!