WHI Impact Felt Beyond Food

A powerful motivator in making changes in our lives is that we often feel better as a result. For example, if you stop smoking, you may feel healthier and get sick less often. If you take time to tend a neglected friendship, you could rediscover a rewarding relationship. If you decide to exercise more, you might feel more fit and energetic.

We talked to Dietary Change participants across the U.S. and found that the same holds true for being in WHI; many have found that their involvement has led to feeling better and healthier, both physically and emotionally.

While it’s exciting to think of what effect your commitment may have on women of the future, it’s also great to realize how you benefit right now... liking what you see when you look in the mirror, laughing together at meetings, influencing your spouse’s eating habits, or feeling more confident. If your dietary goals become challenging or boring, focus on the profits of your investment in your health. You’ll probably hear yourself in the words of your WHI peers:

Healthy Bodies and Minds

“I have felt so much better since changing what I eat.”—Pat Jellesma
“I’m much more conscious of what fat- and salt-ridden food can do to me and of how I use food as an emotional crutch. I think I am healthier than I would have been without WHI.”—Frances Crane
“Physically, I feel great and emotionally, I’ve acquired confidence that I never had before.”—Sara Onorato
“The best part is feeling so great and losing 30 pounds. WHI is maintaining my happy, energetic self into old age. At 76, I have all the optimism, energy, smartness, and even the weight, I had at 26.”—Ethel Romm
“Emotionally, I am grateful for good health.”—Barbara Torina

Ripple Effect

“My family is also changing a lot of their bad eating habits.”—Shirley Lunde
“I have radically changed the way I eat and I have tried to teach others about good nutrition.”—Dorothy Greenberg
“This healthy way of eating has helped me with my husband’s recovery from triple bypass heart surgery. I felt confident and not the least overwhelmed by the necessary changes in my husband’s diet.”—Doris Scott
“Not only have I been educated, I’ve also become something of an expert to my friends and family.”—Judith Beatrice

Accomplishment

“I’ve learned a lot about myself...WHI has given me the incentive to change my lifestyle and in doing so, challenge my mind, my imagination and my habits.”—Janet DeNicola
“I feel very good about being asked to participate in something as important as the future of women’s health—and the study has become a way of life.”—Eileen Gitlin
“Before I became involved in WHI, I used butter and half & half...I never thought I would be able to eliminate these items from my daily diet.”—NY participant

Supportive Sisters

“I’ve liked getting to know the many admirable and honorable women in my group.”—Patricia Moore
“I have enjoyed the group of women—listening to their solutions to problems with which I have had to cope.”—Peggy Wormuth
“The best part is knowing you have ‘sisters’ in pain and glory!”—Portland participant
“The meetings have exposed me to people I never would have had the opportunity to meet and learn from.”—Madalyn Freidberg

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Remote Island Doesn’t Maroon Participant

Zenobia Lewis thinks she has it easier than other WHI Dietary Change participants. With bananas growing in her backyard and access to a market overflowing year-round with leafy, green vegetables, eggplant, cassava melons and squash – just to name a few – making healthy food choices is a given. "You'd be crazy not to eat healthy here!" she exclaims.

"Here" are the Solomon Islands, Zenobia's home for the past two years. As a Peace Corps administrative officer, she lives and works in the capitol city of Honiara in these South Pacific islands east of Papua New Guinea. Despite the distance, this 56-year-old remains active in the Dietary Study, making her one of WHI's most far-flung participants.

It's not her first adventure in living far from home. In the 1960s, she married a man from Zambia and lived with him and their daughter in Central Africa. After their divorce, Zenobia returned to the U.S. and completed her bachelor's and graduate degrees while working for the Internal Revenue Service.

Eager to live overseas again and continue her government work, Zenobia was hired by the Peace Corps and sent to her Solomon Island post. She's responsible for the management of their administrative office and taking care of the Peace Corps volunteers. She ensures the volunteers receive their living allowances and any needed transportation or medical care. In her urban setting, there is electricity and running water, although she uses rainwater, which is cleaner than the city water supply, for drinking. Supermarkets have minimal supplies, but the open air markets have a bounty of fresh options.

Healthy eating has become a way of life for Zenobia. "I don't find it challenging. It's natural for me now," she says. "I just go out and look for what I need to have." She often starts her day with cereal and soy milk, topped with bananas, papaya, pineapple, or some other readily-available fruit. Zenobia attended dietary classes at the

Zenobia Lewis

Medstar Clinical Center in Washington, D.C., when she first joined WHI in 1997. Her nutritionist now sends her the session materials, which Zenobia appreciates. "I'm so glad she sends it way out here," she says. "I know it costs extra money to send it overseas, but I like it and I share the information with people in the office." She faithfully self-monitors for six days every other month and faxes her food diary to the clinic. "It's not a chore," she says of self-monitoring. "I look forward to doing it. It keeps me on my toes!"

Zenobia finds WHI interesting and is proud to be a part of it. Given her family history of cancer, stroke, and diabetes, she's hoping that a better lifestyle will make a difference for her generation. "I want to be a role model for my daughter," she explains. "She admires me getting out and doing things. And when she sees that I've changed my lifestyle, it rubs off on her. So this is how the next generation is going to be helped also."

[Editor's Note: Zenobia has now returned to the United States and is working at the Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.]
Door County Mini-Meatloaves

Canned cherries reduce the fat and add moisture to these tasty meatloaves. The individual loaves are perfect for cooking for one or two, and make future last-minutes meals easier.

1 cup canned, pitted, unsweetened tart cherries
1-1/2 cup rolled oats
1 egg
1/2 cup V-8® tomato juice
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 packet of onion soup mix
1 pound 90% lean ground beef

Topping:
1 cup ketchup
1 teaspoon dry mustard
2 tablespoons brown sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a non-stick muffin pan with cooking spray.
2. Drain canned cherries. Add cherries to a food processor and process until the cherries are smooth. If you don’t have a food processor, puree the cherries in a blender then mix the pureed cherries by hand with the rest of the ingredients.
3. Add the rolled oats, egg, V-8 juice, garlic powder and onion soup mix to the food processor.
4. Add the ground beef to the food processor. Process on low until the beef and the cherry mixture are mixed evenly.
5. Measure a heaping 1/3 cup of the ground beef mixture for each serving and place in each muffin cup, for a total of 10 mini-meatloaves.
6. Bake for 25 minutes. Remove pan from the oven and add a small amount of topping to each serving. Place the pan back in the oven for about 5 minutes or until ground beef is completely cooked (ground beef is safely cooked at 160°F). Loaves may be individually frozen and reheated in a microwave oven.

Makes 10 servings
Fat: 4.5 grams per serving
Grain Servings: 0.5 per serving

Recipe from the Madison WHI Clinical Center Nutrition Staff
Apricot Sticky Muffins

When your energy level is fading fast, these muffins are your ticket for a boost. Dried apricots and farina cereal increase the recipe’s iron content.

1 cup apple juice
1/2 cup finely chopped apricots
1-3/4 cups all purpose flour
1/3 cup uncooked farina (such as Cream of Wheat®)
1/3 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 cup stick margarine, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large egg whites, lightly beaten
1 carton (8 ounces) plain fat-free yogurt
Cooking spray
2 tablespoons sugar

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.

2. Combine apple juice and apricots in a microwave-safe bowl. Cover with heavy-duty plastic wrap, and vent. Microwave at HIGH 3 minutes or until apricot mixture boils. Let stand, covered; cool completely. Drain apricots in a colander over a bowl, reserving apple juice.

3. Lightly spoon flour into dry measuring cups, and level with a knife. Combine the flour and the next 5 ingredients (farina through nutmeg) in a medium bowl, and make a well in the center of mixture. Combine 3 tablespoons reserved apple juice, margarine, vanilla, egg whites, and yogurt; stir well with a whisk. Add to flour mixture, stirring just until moist. Stir in reserved apricots.

4. Spoon batter into 12 muffin cups coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400°F for 20 minutes or until muffins spring back when touched lightly in center. Remove muffins from pans immediately; place on a wire rack. Dip muffin tops in remaining apple juice; sprinkle each with 1/2 teaspoon sugar.

Makes 1 dozen muffins
Fat: 4.3 grams per muffin
Grain Serving: 1 per serving
Recipe from Cooking Light, May 1998
(Submitted by Winston-Salem WHI Clinical Center Nutrition Staff)
Group 24 at the Miami Clinical Center has a lot to be proud of. Though this Spanish-speaking group has experienced many family and transportation challenges, they remain committed to their dietary changes. Their session completion rate is 96 percent and 85 percent of the group self-monitors. As one group member says, “Becoming part of this program has been the best thing that ever happened in my life. I have learned to eat healthy and that makes me feel energetic!”

Left to right: Silvia Pietrasanta, Dania Rivero, Cristina Caldas, Conzuelo Perez, Myrtha Hurtado, Olga de Novi, MS, RD, LD (Group Nutritionist), Elita Yanez, Nury Molina, Berta Osori.

WHI Bestsellers...

Dietary Change participants across the country created book titles to describe their WHI experience. Here are just a few of the many creative responses:

Wholesome Healthy Ingredients: My New Lifestyle by Johnna Nelson
I’d Kill for a Cookie by Madalyn Freidberg
Dear Food Diary: My WHI Long-Term Study Experience by Dorothy Greenberg
Swimming Against the Tide: Eating Well in a Bad-Food World by Ethel Romm
One Generation to Another by Eunice Hoffman
The Labels I’ve Read by Mary Morasso
Together We Can Do It by Jacquie Simoneaux
With Love to My Daughters and Granddaughters by Margaret Cooper
Remember the Butter Pats by Barbara Prewandowski
Eat Healthy, Be Healthy by Alice Almaya
Making A Difference by Jean Kellogg
Learning to Love the Lack of Fat by Gloria Noval
High Life on Low-Fat Meals by Madelyn Wolf
Where’s The Fat? by Janice Steek
On the Road to a Healthy Lifestyle by Norma Tindall
Yes, I Can—A Woman’s Point of View by Linda Millian
Reading My Way Through the Grocery Store by a Sacramento, CA participant
WHI Impact Felt Beyond Food (continued)

“I’ve enjoyed meeting a wide variety of women with different lives and careers and hearing how they meet the diet requirements in their different ways.” –Tessa Blumberg

“I feel I am not ALONE in this endeavor. A relationship has formed with other women in the group and experiences are shared.” –Leah Lieberman

“The reward is that we meet each other as old friends now, engaging in a common enterprise.” –Lydia Kesich

Hope for the Future

“Nutrition seems to be controversial in so many claims that appear to contradict one another, but hopefully, studies such as this will squash all the bickering and doubt.”

–Portland participant

“If what we do helps people, it was all worth it.”

–Dorothy Strong

“It feels good to know that I’m contributing to the understanding of women’s health issues on a scale never before studied.” –Phyllis Pintarich

“I know that in some way I am contributing towards the health and welfare of generations to come.”

–Heliana Gonzalez