

medication to treat the symptoms or CHIP which would be a life-long solution.”

Though Colleen liked the program, she found it difficult to stay on it because her husband wasn't at all interested in changing the way he ate.

“I ended up eating the way I always did and was miserable,” she says.

Then in March of last year, at the age of 61, Jim realized that he needed to make changes to improve his health and agreed to attend CHIP with Colleen. This time Colleen was able to implement and stick to the program. As a result she feels better and her GERD is under control. But Jim came away with the biggest change.

“It is exciting to be part of something – I don't want to say religious – but so powerful,” Jim says. “Dr. Diehl is a real authority on lifestyle health and with his magnetic personality you do sit up and listen.”

Jim took what he learned and put it into practice. “I have lost 35 pounds and am just 15 pounds away from my goal of 180,” he says. “And in just the first four weeks of the program I dropped my cholesterol from 211 to 163 and I have never been able to get it below 200.”

Jim doesn't just measure the change in numbers. He reports that now he sleeps better, has more energy and feels brighter and more cheerful.

The CHIP program was so life changing that Jim encouraged his parents, Ann and Jim Hanson Sr., to attend. “They saw how much weight I had lost and expressed that ‘it is nice for the kids to be doing this’ but resisted,” Jim Jr. says.

Finally with some prompting, Ann and Jim Sr., who are in their early 80s, agreed to attend the CHIP session in October 2006. “They have always been meat and potatoes type people,” Jim Jr. says. “What surprised me was how they took to the program. Dad had a dramatic drop in his cholesterol and Mom, who has been on medication for hypertension for years, has normal blood pressure without medicine.”

CHIP in Your Life

Diehl is in Rockford Feb. 5 to 28 for the winter CHIP program and will return

in October for the next live presentation. The program provides a wealth of information on the four components of CHIP - nutrition, exercise, stress management, and community support.

“Taking this class with a group of people who are highly interested in getting information is an excellent way to learn,” Greenlaw says. “Once people learn the basic concepts it is easier to choose the right foods and harder to choose the wrong ones, knowing the impact those foods have on how they feel and how long they will live.”

Greenlaw, who has been practicing medicine for 30 years, credits the CHIP program as having most profound change in patients who take on that lifestyle. “I see positive changes in symptoms and diseases, as well as increased energy and an improved feeling of well-being,” he says. “People realize they are on three to five medications and 10 to 14 pills a day. That isn't quite the way they want to live. I have seen many people reduce or eliminate their medication through lifestyle changes.”

One of the basic elements that Greenlaw sees as pivotal in CHIP and other diet programs is eliminating white sugar and flour from the diet. “Carbs need to be food as grown, not carbs that come from manufacturing process,” he says. “Get junk out of diet no matter what program you are following and your sugar cravings decrease in week or two.”

In addition to changing eating habits, it is important to learn how to deal with stress. “We are designed to fight or flight in reaction to stress, but in today's world that usually doesn't happen,” Greenlaw says. “So the stress hormones reside in our bodies as toxins if they aren't burned off.”

To cope with stress Greenlaw recommends a 20 minute walk at the end of the day, especially a stressful day, so your body “thinks” it has fought or fled.

“This is critical to nutrition working well,” Greenlaw says. “Especially since people are often driven to eat to feed nervous energy.”

Greenlaw shares some basic rules to follow if you are ready to make healthy lifestyle changes. Remember to check with your physician before starting an exercise program or taking supplements.

- Eliminate junk food.
- Eat five to nine servings daily of fruits and vegetables.
- Increase consumption of good fats including Omega 3 Fatty Acids, which can be found in flaxseed oil or flaxseed and deep cold water fish such as wild salmon, mackerel sardines, and cod.
- Walk 30 minutes a day or if using a pedometer– 10,000 steps.
- Practice stress management skills such as meditation, prayer, relaxation or yoga.
- Spend time with people who make you feel good.

And finally, Greenlaw recommends that every person in this culture needs to be on a multi-vitamin because the way food is grown, it can be lacking in important micro-nutrients.

While going through the CHIP program is the ideal way to learn how to make healthy lifestyle changes, you don't have to wait months to start. If you are reading this early in the month, you may still be able to get into the February CHIP program. Visit CHIP's Web site at www.chiphealth.com for more information.

If not, take a look at the meal examples and lists of foods to avoid and foods to enjoy. Greenlaw recommends the books “Foods that Fight Pain” by Neal Barnard and “The Culprit and the Cure” by Steve Aldana as good resources for future reading.

To make a difference in the health of Americans, the CHIP program has an uphill battle ahead of it. Trillions of dollars are spent annually to move people to make unhealthy food choices. “People hear that they should eat whatever, because ‘they deserve it,’” Diehl says. “We are giving people a new concept of what they deserve.” 