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The Power of Lifestyle Medicine

Saray Stancic, M.D., P.O. Box 579, Allendale, NJ 07401

Web site www.drstancic.com E-mail contact@drstancic.com

News

25 Year Walk

On October 11, 1995, after a grueling 24-hour shift at the hospital, Dr. Saray Stancic awoke from a quick nap to find she had lost feeling in her lower extremities. Ending up in the same emergency room in which she had been working, she was rushed for a MRI, which resulted in a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) that same night. She had started her shift as a young, healthy physician, and ended it as a patient with a serious, debilitating chronic illness.

With this diagnosis came a grim prognosis: she was informed by her neurologist that she would end up severely disabled within 20 years and was given a bleak picture of a future that included diapers and wheelchairs. Treatment involved a cascade of drugs, each requiring additional medications to control side effects. With her neurological condition deteriorating, her basic mobility became more and more difficult.

This continued until she came across an article proposing a connection between diet and severity of disease in MS. This propelled her into an intensive search of the scientific literature, which convinced her of the potential impact of lifestyle modifications to manage her illness. She discontinued her medications and began incorporating the tenets of lifestyle medicine described in her book, *What's Missing From Medicine*, changing lifestyle factors such as her diet, stress management, sleep hygiene, and, as difficult as it was in the beginning, adding exercise. Slowly, she began to regain mobility, strength and balance to the point that in 2010, she ran a marathon.

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25 Year Walk

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On the 20-year anniversary of her diagnosis, the point when she had been told she would be confined to a wheelchair, Dr. Stancic walked 20 miles – one mile for every year since her diagnosis. Last Fall, on October 11, 2020, she walked 25 miles to commemorate that at 25 years post-diagnosis, she was still going strong, with her mobility, strength and endurance restored, a testament to the power of lifestyle medicine.



“...on October 11, 2020, she walked 25 miles to commemorate that at 25 years post-diagnosis, she was still going strong...”

What's Missing From Medicine: Part 2 – The Plant-Centered Plate

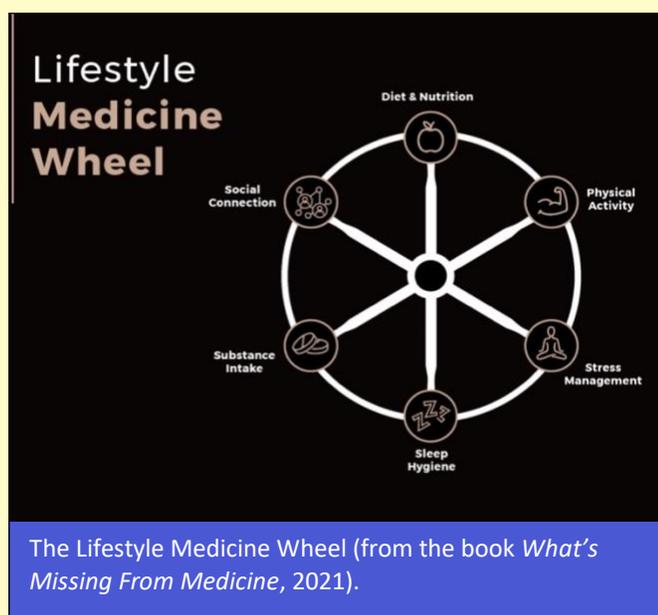
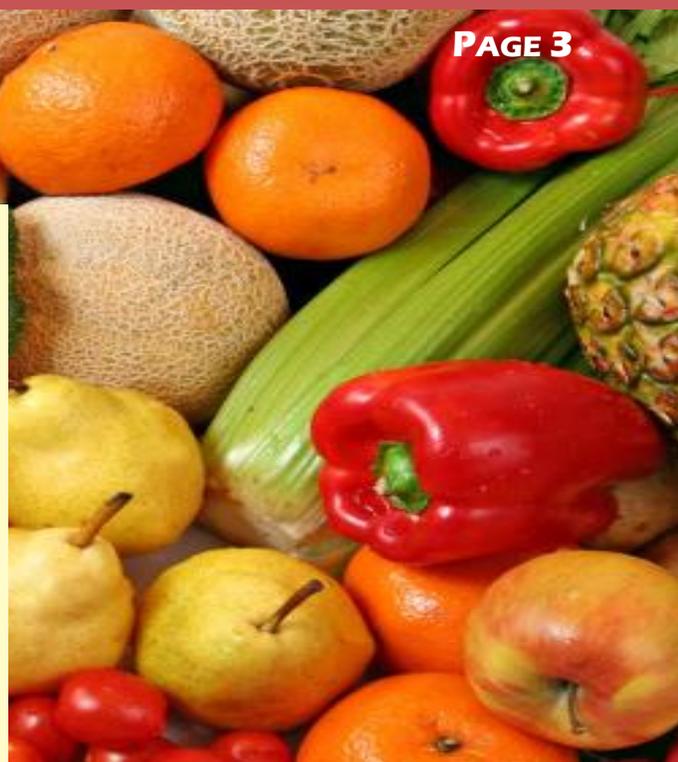
Over the next several issues, we will present excerpted passages from the book “What’s Missing From Medicine” by Saray Stancic, M.D. To find the book to read in its entirety, please check Available Media on page 8.

The ideas introduced in this book are meant to be food for life. That is, we are not eating this way for a few months or a year; this is a lifelong venture. Because you are embarking on meaningful and lasting change, as you introduce small changes it’s important to reinforce them daily, and soon they will become habits. I have no doubt you can do this, and I encourage you to enjoy the process, and be kind to yourself when things don’t go perfectly. Use any momentary lapses or setbacks as lessons to strengthen and grow. I’ll offer more tips about how to do this as we move along. I would like to begin with a quote from Michael Pollan:

*Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.*¹

When I read that and compared it to my extensive research into the medical research on nutrition I thought, *Yep. That pretty much sums it up.* The only thing I’d quibble with is actually an added bonus for those of us choosing a plant-based diet . . . we really can’t eat “too much.” Most Americans do eat too much when it comes to the processed foods, meat, and dairy that we routinely pile on our plates. We certainly don’t want to eat too much of those, so if you are opting to keep some animal protein in your diet it’s important to listen to Pollan’s “not too much” advice. But plant-based foods are so rich in fiber that they simply take up too much real estate in your stomach to go overboard. These foods have tons of nutrients and few calories. It’s the difference between eating 100 calories of broccoli (a whole plate or more) and 100 calories of steak, which translates to a few bites.

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The Lifestyle Medicine Wheel (from the book *What’s Missing From Medicine*, 2021).

“Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants”
- Michael Pollan

What's Missing From Medicine: Part 1 – Introduction (continued from page 3)



When I am asked the question, “Dr. Stancic, what should I eat to maintain maximum health?” The answer is simple: *Eat mostly plants*. How does this translate to building our plates? It means consuming a whole foods, plant-based diet. Every day, eat fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds; eat few or no animal foods (including dairy and eggs); and avoid processed foods altogether, which I refer to as “foodstuff.” Foodstuffs are highly processed prepackaged items you can find in any grocery store: sugary cereals, chips, pastries, cookies, and the like. Many of these products have literally been made in a lab to be what food scientists call hyperpalatable. They are layered with sugar, salt, and fat in ways that trigger gut and brain biochemical signals that build irresistible cravings and even addiction.²

With each of these six lifestyle changes, and especially diet and nutrition, you’re never going to get it “100 percent right.” There will be days when you’re super busy and you feel like you don’t have time to prepare a delicious salad, or days when you’re tired, or sick, and don’t feel motivated to cook for yourself. That’s OK; just pick up where you left off, and try to be as consistent as you can overall. The goal is that you’ll have a healthy relationship with food and you’ll be excited to eat in a way that feels good for your body and your mind. Does this mean you’ll never eat a piece of cake again? No. You’ll find yourself at birthday parties, holiday parties, and weddings, and it’s OK if you want to have a treat now and again. Communing over food is wonderful, and it doesn’t happen for the majority of our meals. Allow yourself to enjoy food and the company of others, and I’ll bet you’ll look forward to returning to your routine of nutritious food that you’ve prepared for yourself once the event is over. It’s not about “succeeding” or “failing”; it’s about consistency, and routine, and returning to healthy habits when we deviate from them—without judgment or guilt.

“It’s not about ‘succeeding’ or ‘failing’; it’s about consistency, and routine, and returning to healthy habits when we deviate from them—without judgment or guilt.”

¹. Michael Pollan, “Unhappy Meals,” *New York Times*, January 28, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/28/magazine/28nutritionism.t.html>.

². David A. Kessler, *The End of Overeating: Taking Control of the Insatiable American Appetite* (New York: Rodale, 2009).

Recipes

LENTIL CHILI

This meal is full of fiber and protein, and the colorful vegetables carry lots of vitamins.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced medium
- 1 green pepper, seeded, diced medium
- 1 red pepper, seeded, diced medium
- 1 yellow pepper, seeded, diced medium
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 jalapeno peppers, thinly sliced (seeded, if you want it less spicy)
- 3 to 4 tablespoons mild chili powder (less if you want less spicy)
- 1 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1.5 teaspoons salt
- Several dashes fresh black pepper
- 1/8th teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 cups water (plus extra as needed)
- 1 cup dried brown lentils
- 1 can crushed tomatoes (28 oz. can)
- 1 can fire-roasted diced tomatoes (15 oz. can)
- 1.5 cups cooked kidney beans, rinsed and drained (15 oz. can)
- 1.5 cups cooked black beans, rinsed and drained (15 oz. can)
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons lime juice

(Continued on page 6)



Lentil Chili

(Continued from page 5)

Preheat a 4 quart pot over medium high heat. Sauté the onion and peppers in the oil with a big pinch of salt for 5 to 7 minutes, until onion is translucent.

Add the garlic, and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the chili powder (start with 3 tablespoons; can add more according to taste), oregano, cumin, salt, pepper, and cloves and toss to coat the onions, letting the spices toast a bit (about a minute).

Add the 4 cups water and scrape the bottom of the pan to deglaze. Add the lentils, cover the pot and turn the heat up to bring to a boil. Let boil for about 20 minutes, stirring every now and again. The lentils should still be firm, but almost tender enough to eat.

Add the crushed tomatoes, roasted tomatoes, kidney beans and black beans. Cover the pot and turn heat down to simmer. Let cook for about 30 more minutes, stirring occasionally. The lentils should be quite mushy. You may also need to add more liquid depending on how much the chili has cooked down. Add lime and maple syrup, then taste for salt and seasoning. Let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes to allow the flavors to blend before serving.



Servings	12
Nutrition Facts (per 1 Serving)	
Calories	185
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated	0.3 g
Trans	0 g
Polyunsaturated	0.4 g
Monounsaturated	1.1 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Sodium	491.6 mg
Total Carbohydrates	32.4 g
Dietary Fiber	11.5 g
Sugar	5.9 g
Added Sugars	0 g
Sugar Alcohols	0 g
Net Carbs	⚠️
Protein	10.1 g
Vitamin D	0 %
Calcium	7.1 %
Iron	15.2 %
Potassium	633.8 mg
Vitamin A	29.6 %
Vitamin C	111.6 %

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Dr. Stancic's Upcoming Speaking Engagements

July 24

Virtual

Multiple Sclerosis Wellness Symposium

[LEARN MORE](#)

July 24

Virtual

2nd Annual International Conference on the Future of Women's Health

[LEARN MORE](#)

September 17

Virtual

Romanian Society of Lifestyle Medicine

[LEARN MORE](#)

October 2

Midland, TX

Food is Medicine Seminar

[LEARN MORE](#)

October 23-24

Orlando, FL

Plant-based Prevention of Disease Conference

[LEARN MORE](#)



Available Media

Code Blue

Code Blue reveals lapses in the current state of medicine and provides a common-sense solution by featuring the practice of lifestyle medicine to prevent, manage, and reverse chronic diseases. The film presents the hurdles to the proposed shift: antiquated curricula in medical schools, confusion in the media, inadequate government policies, and the underlying influences of the pharmaceutical and food industries.

98 mins | USA | Documentary | Stereo | HD | NTSC

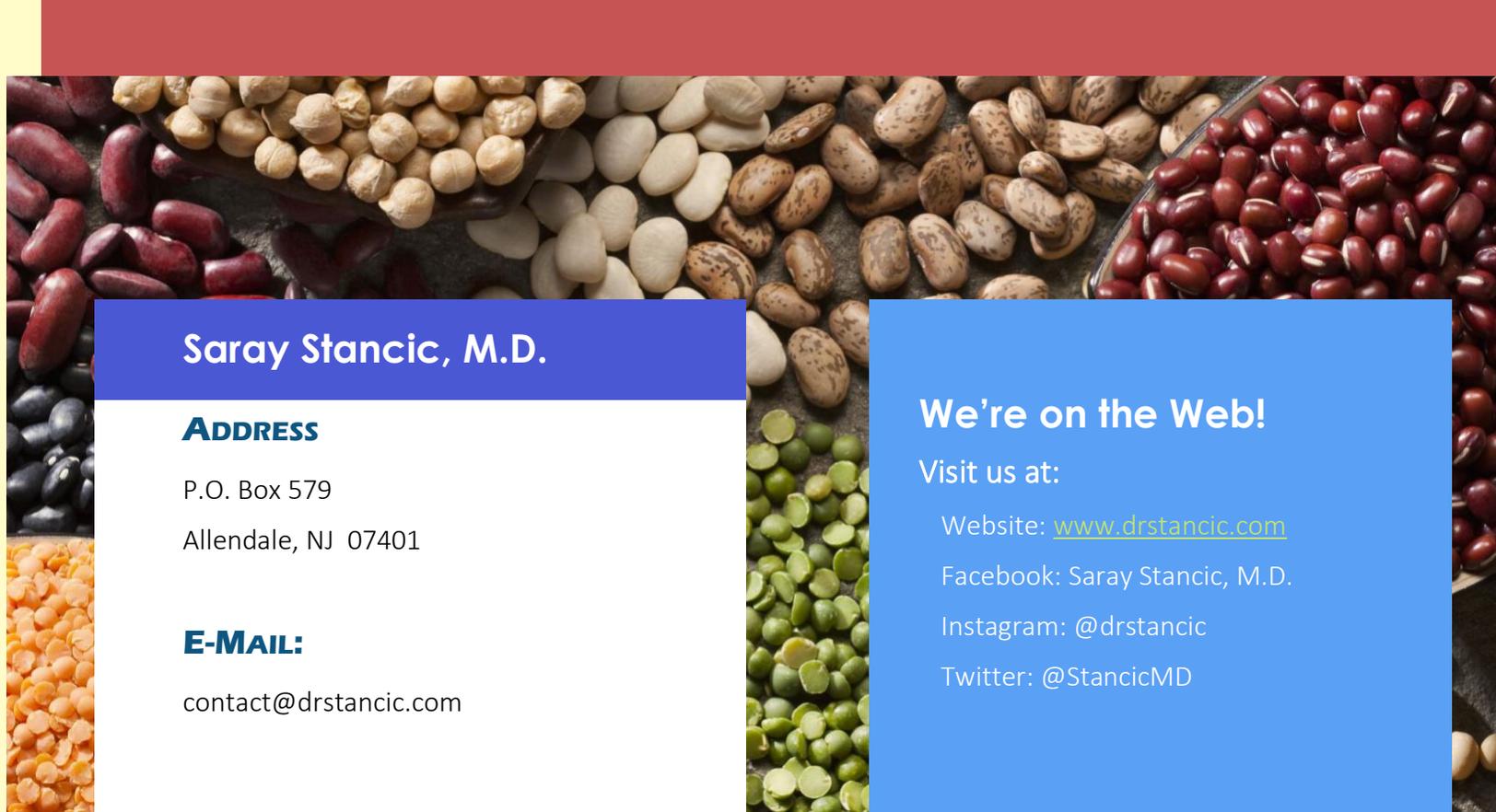
<https://www.codebluedoc.com>

What's Missing From Medicine: Six Lifestyle Changes to Overcome Chronic Illness

In this book, Dr. Stancic shares her own inspiring story and explains the incredible power that specific lifestyle changes can have for those living with chronic illness. Her prescription to prevent, treat, and even reverse chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, autoimmune diseases like lupus, multiple sclerosis, and many others, is what readers will find in this book.

<https://drstancic.com/whats-missing-from-medicine-book/>





Saray Stancic, M.D.

ADDRESS

P.O. Box 579
Allendale, NJ 07401

E-MAIL:

contact@drstancic.com

We're on the Web!

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