

# Inside Integrative Medicine

March 2024

**Integrative  
Medicine  
Virtual Group  
Classes**

## The Integrative Medicine Center Welcomes our New Dietitian

Our Integrative Medicine Center is growing! We are excited to welcome Starla Garcia, MEd, RDN, LD to the team. She has just started to work with patients, caregivers and their family either as part of one-on-one consultations or as part of our group lifestyle counseling programs.

Nutrition and health goals Starla can help you with include:

- Regaining strength and energy throughout the treatment and post-treatment process
- Finding foods and creating meals that align with your health goals
- Adding in micronutrients that your body needs into your everyday diet <sup>1</sup>
- Incorporating meal options that work for you AND your family
- Taking out the guess work and stress around what to eat for weight loss and other health conditions

Maintaining a healthy diet and body weight is important for individuals navigating cancer treatment and beyond. During treatment, a nourishing diet provides essential nutrients for healing and repair, while post-treatment, it plays a vital role in reducing the risk of cancer recurrence and maintaining overall health and well-being. A significant portion of cancer cases in the United States are preventable through lifestyle changes, including dietary modifications and regular exercise. Obesity, poor nutrition, and inactivity contribute to a staggering one-third of cancer-related deaths. These same factors will influence outcomes after a cancer diagnosis. Research underscores the importance of a diet rich in diverse plant-based foods and low in red and processed meats for reducing cancer risk and improving outcomes.



During cancer treatment recovery, and into survivorship, a dietitian emerges as an invaluable ally. These professionals possess specialized expertise in tailoring nutrition plans to address the unique challenges faced by cancer patients. They can provide personalized guidance to mitigate treatment side effects, optimize nutrient intake, and foster healthy eating habits tailored to individual needs. Dietitians also offer ongoing support and counseling, empowering patients to make informed dietary choices that promote healing and enhance their quality of life. By collaborating closely with healthcare teams, dietitians ensure comprehensive care that integrates nutrition as a cornerstone of cancer treatment and survivorship, ultimately empowering individuals to thrive wherever they are on the cancer care continuum.

For more information, please contact the Integrative Medicine Center at 832-750-3685.

## Integrative Oncology Consultation

Our physicians can give guidance on achieving a comprehensive and integrative approach to your cancer care.

## Exercise/Physical Activity Consultation

A senior physical therapist provides recommendations on achieving safe and optimal exercise during each consultation.

## Oncology Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture is a safe and often effective medical treatment that can be used to manage side effects from cancer and related treatments, including nausea and vomiting, pain, neuropathy, hot flashes, fatigue and dry mouth. Cost: \$80 per treatment.

**New: now offering acupuncture at the League City location!**

## Oncology Massage Treatment

Oncology massage may help patients address anxiety, relieve pain, decrease fatigue and improve sleep quality. Treatments are \$55.

\*Prices for IMC services may be subject to change depending on insurance coverage.

View audio and video resources online: [www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter](http://www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter)

## Health Psychology Consultation

A licensed clinical psychologist will provide both evaluation and interventions to help with lifestyle change and address symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression.

## Yoga/Meditation Consultation

Yoga/meditation lowers stress, depression, and anxiety, improves sleep, memory, physical functioning, and overall quality of life, as well as increasing spiritual well-being. A yoga/ meditation therapist would provide interventions. Cost: \$50 per session.

## Nutrition Consultation

A registered dietitian provides personalized nutrition counseling and education to help patients manage side effects and reach their goals during and after cancer treatment. Education emphasizes a whole food, plant-based diet for optimal health.

## Music Therapy

Individual music therapy is provided by a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC) and involves engaging in music interactively in a variety of ways, with outcomes including anxiety reduction, fostered well-being and exploring ways of reconnecting to music for daily quality of life. Cost: \$50 per session.

## How to Register for our Virtual Group Classes:

1. Call Integrative Medicine Center at 832-750-3685.
2. All classes are free.
3. Complete e-update \*liability waiver and telemedicine consent in MyChart at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled class.

**Note: All classes are open to both patients and caregivers.**

## March 2024

| Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday          | Friday                                |
|--|---|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Yoga for Health</b><br>10:30-11:30                | <b>Yoga Nidra</b><br>10:00-11:00<br>2nd Tues.   | <b>Yoga for Health</b><br>10:30-11:30                   | <b>No Classes</b> | <b>Yoga for Health</b><br>10:30-11:30 |
| <b>Connect &amp; Reflect with Music</b><br>1:30-2:30 | 5:00 - 6:00<br>4th Tues.<br><b>Pranayama/Breathing</b><br>10:00-11:00<br>1st & 3rd<br>Tues. | <b>Healing Through Writing</b><br>2:00-3:00<br>2nd Wed. |                   |                                       |

### Group Class Descriptions:

**Yoga for Health:** Features a gentle form of yoga, including stretching, breathing, relaxation, and meditation techniques.

**Yoga Nidra:** This is a guided meditation in the supine position to bring you into a state of deep rest.

**Healing Through Writing:** Using expressive writing as a tool to identify and process difficult emotions in a supportive environment.

**Pranayama/Breathing:** The practice of Pranayama involves breath regulation through various breathing exercises. **Now offered on Tuesdays!**

**Connect & Reflect with Music:** A interactive and supportive music group, led by a Board-Certified Music Therapist, using music engagement and conversation to enhance well-being and encourage connectedness. No music experience is required.

## Hearty Spaghetti with Lentils & Marinara

**Total Time:** 35 minutes, Servings: 4

**Website:** <https://cookieandkate.com/hearty-spaghetti-with-lentils-marinara/print/28098/>

### Ingredients:

#### Lentils

- 1/2 cup dry lentils (French green lentils or regular brown lentils), or 1 1/2 cups cooked lentils (leftover or from a can, rinsed and drained)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 large garlic clove, peeled but left whole
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups vegetable broth or water

#### Everything else

- 2 cups marinara sauce
- 8 ounces whole-grain pasta (or 12 ounces, if you like your pasta less saucy)
- Optional garnishes: grated Parmesan or vegan Parmesan and/or chopped fresh basil
- Optional veggies: 1 chopped medium zucchini and 1 cup of sliced mushrooms

### Instructions:

1. To cook the lentils, first pick through the lentils for debris and then rinse them in a fine-mesh colander. In a small saucepan, combine the lentils, bay leaf, garlic, salt and broth.
2. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer. Simmer until the lentils are cooked through and tender, which will take somewhere between 20 to 35 minutes, depending on the age and variety of the lentils. Drain the lentils, discard the bay leaf and garlic, and set the pot aside, uncovered.
3. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Cook the pasta until al dente, according to the package directions. Drain, then return the pasta to the pot and set it aside.
4. Stir the marinara into the lentils and warm them together over medium heat. Divide pasta into bowls, top with warm marinara and lentils, and garnish with Parmesan and/or chopped fresh basil, if you'd like. Serve warm. Leftovers will keep well, covered and refrigerated, for up to 4 days.

**Notes:** **Make it gluten free:** Substitute your favorite gluten-free pasta.

**Make it dairy free/vegan:** Don't add cheese, or choose a vegan alternative.

**Parmesan note:** Most Parmesans are not technically vegetarian (they contain animal rennet), but Whole Foods 365 and BelGioioso brands offer vegetarian Parmesan cheese.

