

FOOD/HEALTH

Get to know the doctor's office team

ALICIA JACOBS, MD
For The Colchester Sun

Primary care providers are responding to the need in health care to increase quality and improve access as part of health care reform. They are moving away from a doctor-centered medical model to a patient-centered medical model. As a result, medical offices today are far more complex and are run by teams of health care professionals.

Patients now talk to their medical team rather than just their physician, and all of the members of a medical teamwork together to create seamless health care. Who's who in medicine? And what they can take care of? Besides doctors, there are associate staff (mid-level providers) who also practice medicine. They can evaluate and treat patients, prescribe medications and assess need for further care. Mid-level providers include nurse practitioners, who are advanced trained nurses who are licensed and can practice independently. Another member of the team is the physician assistant, who partners with a supervising physician but can see patients on independently own as well.

Registered nurses are nurses with highly trained clinical skills. Typically, they are in direct contact with patients and respond to many of the phone calls a medical office receives daily. Licensed practical nurses and medical assistants specialize more on actual patient visits to the office. They take vital signs and review symptoms and medications, perform medical interventions and treatments, follow up on tests done, as well as respond

to any other patient needs. All nurses help run special programs to improve quality in medical offices — these projects include following up after hospital admissions, transitioning to and from nursing homes, and referring to community services.

The practice supervisor typically runs the office and is also involved with improving business systems and the process of providing care. The remainder of the staff do the field most of the phone calls, make appointments and referrals, clear medications, tests or equipment through "prior authorizations," as well as check in and check out patients with appointments.

This year, many medical offices in Vermont have been, or will be become, recognized as Patient Centered Medical Homes through working with the Vermont Blueprint for Health. This is a special designation acknowledging that an office has met criteria for handling and tracking chronic health conditions. This extra work and care are supported and funded by both the state and insurance companies. When an office becomes a medical home, then there are even more support staff helping to keep patients healthy. Part of the new staff will be members of Community Health Teams (CHTs) whose goal it is to improve patients' and the community's general wellness and better treat chronic health conditions.

Dr. Jacobs is the medical director of Colchester Family Practice and a clinical assistant professor of Family Medicine at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

Getting on in years? Exercise power over age

By STEVE FUCHS
For The Colchester Sun

Exercise and good nutrition go a long way toward improving health, quality of life and longevity for all ages.

Regular physical activity combined with a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, fish and healthy fats, lowers the risk of developing common age-related illnesses, including heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The following workouts performed on regular basis will boost health and longevity:

- Cardio is necessary not just for the strong and healthy, but also for the brain. Not only does cardio help

boost cognitive abilities, but also reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

- Resistance training is a must. Building muscle strength and increasing bone mass and density is important as the years go on.

Balance exercises are especially important because good coordination and stability will help prevent injuries caused by falls.

- Flexibility training will increase your range of motion, decrease muscular tension and also strengthen your joints, tendons and ligaments — all of which is important to prevent or relieve the pain and discomfort of arthritis.



Steve Fuchs is the owner of Burlington Boot Camp. He can be reached at steve@burlingtonbootcamp.com or 876-7787.



Recipe by Tracey Medeiros and Greenfield Highland Beef
Food photography and styling by Tracey Medeiros

Amber ale-braised Highland beef chuck roast

NOTE: A two- to three-pound roast of Highland beef should feed six people. If using other chuck roast, the roast purchased should weight approximately three- to four-pounds for it to feed six people.

6 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 (3- to 4-pound) boneless beef chuck roast
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- All-purpose flour, as needed
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 lbs yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 3 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp pure Vermont maple syrup
- 1 tsp tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 tsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup Vermont apple cider vinegar
- 1 (12-ounce bottle) Vermont amber ale
- 1 cup low-sodium beef broth or water
- 1 1/2 tsp grainy Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 tsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons water (cornstarch slurry)

Preparation:

- Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
- Season meat with salt and pepper to taste. Dredge the entire roast in flour.
- In a large Dutch oven, melt the butter and heat one tablespoon olive oil over

medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add the meat and brown on all sides, about five minutes on each side. Transfer roast to a large plate, set aside.

Add the remaining one tablespoon olive oil to the Dutch oven. Add the onions and sauté until soft and translucent, stirring often, about 12 minutes. Add the garlic, maple syrup, and tomato paste and continue to sauté for one minute. Add the bay leaf, thyme, parsley, vinegar, amber ale and beef broth, scraping the bottom of the pot to loosen brown bits.

Meanwhile, thinly spread the mustard over the entire roast and transfer back into the pot along with any accumulated juices. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Cover and transfer to the oven, and cook, turning roast halfway through cooking, until meat is fork tender, approximately three hours.

Transfer the roast to a work surface and tent loosely with foil. Discard bay leaf and thyme sprigs. Transfer vegetables to a platter and tent loosely with foil. With a spoon skim any fat off the surface of the liquid, and then bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Continue to boil until sauce is reduced slightly. Whisk in the cornstarch slurry and continue to simmer liquid until thickened, about three minutes. Adjust seasonings with salt and pepper to taste.

Cut roast into thick slices, against the grain or pull apart in pieces. Arrange the meat on a platter with the vegetables and the desired amount of sauce. Use remaining sauce as needed.



Greenfield Highland Beef

Co-owners Janet Steward and Ray Shatney
E-mail: info@greenfieldhighlandbeef.com

By TRACEY MEDEIROS
For The Colchester Sun

The Shatney family has been raising Highland cattle on Shat Acres Farm in Greensboro Bend, Vt. for over 40 years. They brand their beef under the brand name Greenfield Highland Beef. Their herd is the third largest in the United States. The family has the oldest closed herd in the country, which means that they have not bought a cow in over 30 years. Today, the farm is considered to have some of the top Highland cattle genetics in the country.

Ray Shatney's dad, Carroll, had an eye for cattle. He knew what bulls to use and what animals to cull. The success of the Shat Acres Farm stems from Ray's dad. He passed away at age ninety-eight, in November of 2009. Carroll loved his Highlands and instilled that love in his son Ray.

Ray lives for his animals and farming. He believes that his Highland cattle are special animals. Being a good steward of the land has been a big part of Ray's upbringing. He believes that if you don't take care of your land, your animals will not have what they need.

Janet Steward, co-owner of Greenfield Highland Beef and Ray's business partner, recently shared the farm's history.

Q: Tell me about the Shat Acres Farm.

A: As I did not grow up a farmer, I came late to the occupation of farming. Ray has been farming all of his life. The Shat Acres Farm has been in existence for over 100 years and was originally a dairy farm. Their earliest breeding herds were called Shat Acres Highlands.

It all began in 1967 when Ray's dad bought his first Highland cow off of a train car in South Dakota. At the time there were no Highlands in the area, and very few in the United States. Carroll took his

Highlands to the county fairs to pay the taxes on the farm. Farmers were paid a premium to bring unique animals to county fairs and the Highlands were certainly a novelty.

I met Ray in 2001. He brought some Highlands to pasture on my land in Plainfield and I also fell in love with them. During that time Ray and his parents were farming and raising about 40 Highlands. I quickly realized that we could not pay for the Highlands just by selling breeding stock. For many years, when there weren't a lot of Highland cattle around, you could sell breeding stock and make a profit. Now that there were more of the breed available, it was difficult to do so and support the farm.

The Shatney's slaughtered some of their animals for their own consumption. I had a Highland hamburger, which was all grass-fed and finished. It was clear to me that Highland beef was just what people were looking for.

Q: Can you describe the taste of Highland beef?

A: It tastes beefy and the flavor just bursts in your mouth. The real difference lies in the fact that there is no greasy, fatty feeling after consuming the beef.

Q: What makes Highland cattle so unique?

A: I started doing some research and discovered a lot of information about Highland beef and its uniqueness. The Highlands have a prehistoric appearance and are the oldest registered cattle breed. There have not been any genetic changes through the centuries. They are exactly the way they were hundreds of years ago. The breed is still able to eat and digest a lot of scrub and brush. In fact, a lot of people use the Highlands to clear pastures and open up land because they are able to eat a variety of plants that other cattle breeds will not.

It is interesting that consuming the weeds and scrub actually changes the flavor of the beef in a very positive way. It flushes out any of the off flavors that you sometimes get with grass-fed beef.

Q: Why are Highland cattle not commercially bred?

A: Highlands are not a commercial beef breed mainly, because they are very slow growing. We cannot butcher a Highland for beef until they are almost three-years-old, while commercial beef, is slaughtered between sixteen- and eighteen-months of age.

Q: What is so special about the meat from Highland cows?

A: The flavor of the meat is what makes it so special. It is the animal's slow growing process that makes the meat so flavorful. For other breeds to get that kind of flavor grain, or corn, has to be added to their diet to put more fat and flavor into the meat. I tell people that



Janet Steward and Ray Shatney stand with a Highland cow on their farm in Greensboro Bend. Photo courtesy of Greenfield Highland Beef

the Highlands do the work for us — they age it on the hoof. The meat tastes like beef that has been aged for forty days.

When you grain feed and finish an animal you get a thick layer of fat on the outside of the beef, not much of it goes into the meat because the cattle are not fed the grain long enough to actually have it become part of the muscle. It just puts fat on the outside.

The hair on Highland cattle insulates their bodies, so they do not put on an outer layer of fat. Any marbling, or fat that they are able to accumulate goes into the meat.

Another unique characteristic of the Highland cattle is that their meat does not get tougher as they get older. We can butcher an eight- to ten-year-old cow who is no longer calving, or in production, and the meat will actually be better than that of the younger members of the herd.

Q: Where can Greenfield Highland Beef be

purchased?

A: We butcher an animal weekly, so we have fresh meat every week. In the Chittenden County area, we usually deliver to City Market at the end of each week.

Q: What makes raising Highland cattle so rewarding for you?

A: I feel really fortunate to be able to supply people with humanely raised, high quality local protein. This job also gets me outdoors. I really like the connection with the land. You build a relationship with the animals. They are super smart and learn quickly what is expected of them and whom they can trust. We feel obligated to make sure that they have a good life and are properly cared for.

Next Week's Treat

Mateo Kehler co-owner of Jasper Hill Farm will be featured in next week's "Meet Your Local Farmer" column, along with his caramelized onion and Bayley Hazen blue galette recipe.

Tracey Medeiros is a freelance food writer, food stylist, recipe developer and tester. Medeiros is the author of Dishing up Vermont (Storey Publishing, 2008). Tracey can be reached at: www.traceymedeiros.com or via e-mail at: traceymedeiros@comcast.net.

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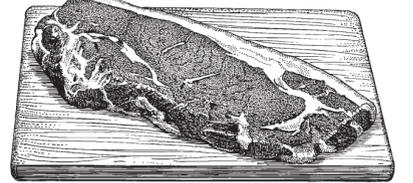
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