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Orthodontic Specialists

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The Story of a Patient: Colleen Herren

I often get asked how I became an oncology nurse. That question is usually followed up with a comment about how hard it must be to care for cancer patients. The reality is, I'm inspired by my patients. I wanted to share my story with you.

I was 30 years old, single, and with three children. I wanted to get into the type of career that would allow me get a job anywhere, in any state, and in any economy. I needed to be flexible. I had no family nearby to help with the kids and no child support. I wanted a job where I could support my family, pay my bills, and feed my kids all without worry. This was my thought process as I worked my way to choosing nursing school, but how I actually became a nurse is much more significant.

I've always believed that we're all connected. What we say or do affects everyone we come in contact with. I was a waitress at a local Shoney's restaurant while I was going to school to prep for nursing school. I would study between shifts, occasionally sitting with the regulars who sometimes liked to help me with my studies.

One of my regulars was a cancer patient. She used to come in with her mother after her chemo treatment for lunch. She only ate a little and we'd talk about the weather, her treatment, my kids, and my schooling. I had recently applied for two local nursing school programs: the community program and the university program. I was on the waiting list and barely getting by. It was this dear lady who put the idea in my head that I would make a good oncology nurse.

Every Wednesday she'd give me encouragement over soup. She told me not to give up and to have faith. It was hard. I worked as many hours as I could, but I had three young girls to care for. During this time, I decided to play the lottery. It was up to \$56 million and it would ease my burden. A long shot, for sure. I got three of the numbers and the rest were one away from the winning numbers. I won \$3 and I prayed.

Not long after, I got a call from the university. I was accepted into the nursing program! I changed my shift hours at the restaurant. I didn't get a chance to thank the wonderful lady who I had shared many soups with. Unfortunately, by the end of the first semester, I was struggling financially. I met with a school counselor. I was

thinking I'd need to take some time off from school and save some money. The counselor told me about a new scholarship created specifically to help women get back on their feet. He said the scholarship had been started by the winner of the \$56 million.

I applied. I wrote an essay about why I was in school and told the story of why I wanted to become a nurse as a single mom raising three beautiful girls, wanting a better life for them. I remembered my lovely woman, the cancer patient, who helped me remember what was truly important in life and helped me believe in myself. There were nearly 1,500 other entries into the scholarship. I won.

At the award ceremony, I saw the mother of the cancer patient who had touched my life so personally and so significantly. The woman I had served soup to every Wednesday had changed my life and because of her generosity, I could continue my education to become a nurse. That amazing woman left behind a legacy I am extremely grateful for: an oncology nurse.

I want to leave you with this: we affect everyone we meet or come into contact with in some way. It might be small and seemingly insignificant, positive or negative. It might be a smile to a stranger on the sidewalk or a call to a friend in need. It might be an encouraging hug for a child or a cross word to the cashier who shortchanged you, or maybe you flip off the guy who just cut you off in traffic and can have a sort of ripple effect. We might never see the consequences, good or bad, from our actions, but they're out there. It's a big responsibility, really, so we should always try our best to make these exchanges positive!

— Colleen Herren, RN, BSN, ONC, MBA



PATIENT OF THE MONTH



17 MONTHS
Jentry W.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

to those who referred a new patient or posted a review!

Uyen N. Allison H. Susan P.
Kim S. Shelly I. Victory L.
Laura H. Kylie H. Mary M.

FROM OUR Patients...

"The experience was not as bad as I thought it was going to be. The worst part for me was getting new wires every so often. I had no problems with the eating and cleaning. Orthodontic treatment has changed my habits of brushing and flossing. The movement of my canines over the years has amazed me. Following Dr. Blom's instructions have given me the great transformation I wanted. I am grateful for this process. It was a long journey, but it turned out for the best."

— Jentry W

Active Thanksgiving Activities

Although the holiday season is rich with all kinds of traditions, there are several that stand out from the pack. For all the sports fans out there, it's the big game they look forward to; for the more warm-hearted crowd, it's the quality time with family that gets them giddy for the holidays. Of course, there's another group of people who aren't as concerned with distant relatives and sports so much as they are with what's for dinner. When that winter weight rears its ugly head come January, however, that last crowd usually wishes they had picked up a set of dumbbells rather than a fork and knife.

Fortunately, there are plenty of Thanksgiving-related activities out there that don't require you to loosen your belt and plop down on the couch in front of the tube.

TURKEY TROT

If you're looking to burn some Thanksgiving calories this year, local Turkey Trots are an excellent way to do so. Not only are they easy to find, they're also very family-friendly and provide an excellent opportunity to get everyone outside and away from the television. Not to mention, the runs are usually pretty short, making it easier to train beforehand.



TOUCH FOOTBALL

Nothing says Thanksgiving like a good, old-fashioned game of football. Much like the Turkey Trot, tossing around the pigskin with your family is a great excuse to get everyone outside and in the game. It works all kinds of different muscle groups, and if you have kids, it helps them work on hand-eye coordination as well as other important motor skills. And for the competitive types out there, full contact is always an option so long as you're careful.

VOLUNTEERING

Now, it may not require throwing a perfect spiral, or showing off your killer touchdown dance, but volunteering at a local shelter or soup kitchen is still plenty active. Not only do you break a sweat in the hustle and bustle of feeding a high volume of hungry people—you also work another really important part of your body: your heart, which is what the holidays are all about.

So, don't be a couch slouch! Get you and your family in gear this holiday season, and get fit. After all, a healthy family is a happy family.

MASTER YOUR MANIA

Between kids, work, and attempting a social life, your existence can start to feel like a giant hamster wheel of doom. Hectic living is just a part of our world, but that doesn't make it easy. Luckily, there are some low and high tech tools to help you get your life under your control—at least until science makes it possible to grow that extra pair of hands!

All Hail the Mighty Google

If you have a smartphone, organization apps seem like gifts from the gods. There are a lot of them out there, and they all offer to solve your organizational woes. Some are shiny and customizable, others are family-oriented and have special little icons for the kiddos and parents. Most disappoint pretty soon out of the gate, but not Google Calendar. This one operates on email addresses, allowing you and your partner in crime to add events to the same calendar—so long as you've opted to view each other's information. Set reminders days, hours, or minutes ahead so you always know what's coming up. The user interface is ridiculously easy to maneuver and the app works on both iOS and Android systems, so it doesn't matter whether you're an Apple or Samsung fan—your info is accessible. The best part? It's on you all day, every day, so there is no way for soccer practice, date night, play-dates, or anything else you do (there's a lot!) to escape you.

The Command Board

White boards are magic. And cheap! Markers in jelly-bean colors make that blank space into anything you want. Together they can be a not-so-secret weapon for keeping your life in line. Companies have been making calendar white boards for years, and they run around \$20 at your local office store. You know where we're heading—hang that bad boy in a central location and let your organizational juices flow. Make sure everyone in the house knows that it's not all on you to be the keeper of The Plan. Anybody can add to the Command Board, allowing all events to get their fair share of attention and planning. If your teen wants a night at the movies, put it on the board. If your sweetie wants a lunch date, the board is where it's at. Your life will be in one, color-coded place and nobody in the house will be in the dark, making organization into a team effort.

Sweet & Spicy



Mango Salmon

Ingredients

- 1 4 oz portion of wild salmon, skinned and cubed
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 2 tbsp Mango Coconut & Pepper Sweet and
- Spicy Marinade (Cindy's Kitchen)
- 1 zucchini, sliced and steamed
- 1 cup watermelon, diced

Directions

Heat coconut oil over medium heat in large skillet. Add salmon and stir frequently for about 3 minutes.

Pour Mango Coconut & Pepper marinade into skillet and cook for another 5-10 minutes, or until salmon is cooked through.

Pair with the steamed zucchini and watermelon and ENJOY!!

Notes

Do not overcook the salmon or it will be very dry. Calories: 476 total (if fixed as recommended above)

NO CAVITIES ALLOWED



Sometimes cavities seem unavoidable. You floss your teeth religiously and always brush after eating or drinking sweets, yet you still seem to end up with a cavity at your bi-annual checkup. Think there is nothing you can do about cavity-prone teeth? Then you haven't heard of sealants. A sealant is a protective coating applied to an at-risk tooth (or teeth). Sealants prevent further damage to the teeth so more expensive (not to mention painful) treatments do not become necessary in the future. (Just say no to abscessed teeth and root canals!) Something that prevents cavities and doesn't force you to floss even more? Incredible!

Another cool thing about sealants is they don't hurt—not even a bit—and it only takes your dentist a few minutes to apply them. A nifty coating is painted over pits on the chewing surfaces of your back teeth and then dried with a light, creating a protective barrier that blocks food or sugar from entering your teeth and creating those pesky cavities. Sealants can benefit both children and adults. Children ages 6 to 14 are at a higher risk for cavities, so it is best for them to get sealants once their permanent molars grow in. If adults have any teeth without fillings or decay, they can benefit from getting sealants, too. Sealants last 5 to 10 years and can be reapplied if need be.

Sealants work hand in hand with the fluoride you get from your toothpaste, mouthwash, and tap water, so keep up your routine of maintaining a healthy mouth, even once you have sealants. Sealants are a great option for those with cavity-prone teeth since it's much better to get them than to wait for inevitable decay and fill the tooth. Every time a tooth gets filled, it becomes weaker. It makes much more sense to get your teeth sealed and save money, time, and pain down the road. So what are you waiting for? Ask your dentist about sealants today and say goodbye to cavities!

