

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today are Amera Nelson and Mick Siems and they're here to talk about our January session of the Living Well series. Good morning.

Amera Nelson: Good morning.

Mick Siems: Good morning.

Katie Johnson: So Amera is a clinical dietician here at Lake Region Healthcare. Mick serves kind of two roles in our interview today. He is our director at Mill Street Residence, but also serves as the president of the Fish and Game Club in Fergus Falls, and they are partnering with us for January 7th next Tuesday's Living Well series, How Wild is Your Game? I love that. I love that title. So it's all about the benefits of cooking with wild game. So before we get started Amera, maybe you can tell us a little bit about your background since you're relatively new here at Lake Region Healthcare, and then Mick, I'll have you chime in with what your role is with the Fish and Game Club.

Mick Siems: Sure.

Amera Nelson: Awesome. Yes. Hello. I have been a dietician for about seven years now and I just joined Lake Region here in August. My role here is to cover inpatient hospital as well as the dialysis center. So I'm kind of a little bit everywhere as a casual. And prior to being here, I was in longterm care for five years as well as did some cooking classes on the side. So yeah.

Katie Johnson: Great. And Mick, you're president of the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club. How long have you been doing that and what is your role with the club or what does that entail with the club?

Mick Siems: Sure. So yeah, I think I've been president for maybe nine years now and hopefully it's not one of those lifelong commitments.

Amera Nelson: Lifelong sentence.

Mick Siems: Yeah. So as president, actually the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club, we're celebrating our 100th anniversary in 2020. So we had tossed around ideas on how to get more visible in the community and knowing what we've done together with related to the community health expo and education, I've always thought there's benefits about wild game from a health standpoint, but from an activity standpoint, what hunting and fishing can do for folks. So that's kind of another thing we're trying to promote the benefits of being outside and taking part in some of those activities we have around here.

Katie Johnson: What is the mission of the Fish and Game Club and how big of an organization is it here?

Mick Siems: Oh, the mission. Gosh, I think it's probably, it started out actually in 1920 was a group getting together that liked to fish and they were called the Fergus Falls Fishing Club and it was a year later they changed it to Fish and Game. And over time it's been more of a social thing for people that like to do things, a way to get together. Definitely conservation has come into play with the hunting laws and rules promoting following those, but then lately our club, we own nine properties, a little over 1,100 acres that we have managed for habitat. So giving a place for deer and ducks and the outside animals to live and promoting the creation of habitat so there are going to be continued places for these animals to live in and a spot for us to hunt them in the fall and enjoy year round.

Katie Johnson: What a great club and mission and cause and such a great partnership that we've put together I think for this Living Well series because the Fish and Game Club is going to provide the food. We're going to actually be able to turn the program over after we do a little education to the Fish and Game Club for a tasting session of some delicious game and we'll talk a little bit more about that later. Let's start with what the agenda looks like from your perspective, Amera, in terms of what you plan to cover in the presentation at next Tuesday's Living Well series.

Amera Nelson: First I really am just going to kind of give a broad overview of nutrition guidance and what we should aim for to have a healthy plate. Looking at that and then we're going to go through how does wild game fit into a healthy diet. A big portion of that also is to get out and be physical. And so hunting has a great aspect to join into that role as well. So yeah.

Katie Johnson: When you talk about benefits of cooking and or eating wild game, what do you think is the number one thing? What rises to the top?

Amera Nelson: There's so many. There's so many that come to the top of my mind, but first and foremost, I think it's just it's fresh. You get to see what you are actually eating and I think the cool process for the avid hunter is to be able to see it from the moment that they are able to have killed a deer or the game to having it on the plate and the preparation. And so I think that's really neat. There's so many other benefits as well.

Katie Johnson: Sure. Let's talk about some of those.

Amera Nelson: Yeah, so definitely the lower sodium because they're not having that extra added salt for the processing factor, no antibiotics or hormones added into that meat in the game. I think that's really important as well. And then also looking at it's a leaner type of protein to consume too. So not to mention the iron and

the zinc that it provides to help with extra immunity. Yeah. And it also just a flavor that only game can provide. So...

Katie Johnson: That is true. That is true. And I would say that sometimes that's part of the bad reputation I think that game gets. Sometimes people will say, "Well it just tastes so gamey" or "I don't like wild game because it's always so tough or dry" or some of those things. What do you think is the secret or the multiple secrets, there's got to be probably more than one, to making wild game taste really good?

Amera Nelson: Yeah. And we actually go through some of those too during the presentation, but what I've found is that about two tablespoons of vinegar with one quart of water and you just soak it and refrigerate it for an hour prior to cooking and that can help pull out some of that gaminess. I've also had some family members that would cook their duck stuffed with some vegetables and potatoes and then also pull that out and discard those because that will also pull some of that gamey flavor out as well. So, yeah.

Katie Johnson: Interesting. How about you, Mick? You cook a lot, don't you?

Mick Siems: I wouldn't say a lot, but one of the things that I do, and this is something my dad maybe taught me, I don't even know, but when I clean a pheasant or a duck or a goose, I will soak it overnight in milk.

Amera Nelson: I do that too.

Mick Siems: I don't know why. I don't know why. I don't know if it does anything for the flavor or not, but it does pull some things out of it. When you take it out the next day to freeze it or prepare, it has a different look to it. I think it does pull maybe some of the blood that might be in the meat out, but just getting back to actually from when you harvest that animal, how you take care of it I think has an importance in the taste later.

Amera Nelson: Oh for sure.

Mick Siems: Whether it's gamey or not, I think the importance of cooling down. Let's say you have got a deer, getting that hide off or getting the intestines, the guts out of it so anything isn't soaking into the meat, but giving it a chance to breathe in the air and cool I think it's very important. I've never hunted antelope, but that's an animal that's out West that's usually it's a lot warmer climate area that how important it is to get the hide off right away and get it on ice. And you'll notice a difference.

Katie Johnson: You mentioned something your dad taught you and to me that's also one of I don't know exactly which component, we talk about all the components of health and wellness, but the tradition, the time that you spend with family and

friends, the things that you pass on from generation to generation. I don't think we can maybe underestimate the benefits that wild game hunting brings in that aspect as well.

- Mick Siems: Oh yeah. Well now we're kind of heading into the ice fishing. There's so many people that I don't know... When you fish in the summertime, it's always like you have to go to the other side of the lake or you're always moving, where in winter fishing, you are maybe putting a hose out and sitting put and letting the fish come to you. And then you have time to visit and people will bring their own foods with and it's more of a-
- Katie Johnson: Social.
- Mick Siems: Social.
- Amera Nelson: Yeah. Social event. And for your mental wellbeing too. That's true.
- Katie Johnson: Yeah. That's just what I was thinking. I think it falls very closely into the social wellness component. How about for each of you, what's your favorite type of wild game to eat and or prepare?
- Amera Nelson: My all time favorite is I just grew up on good old reading deer sausage. Venison deer sausage. Yeah, that is probably my favorite.
- Mick Siems: So not to piggyback on, but I went hunting with a guy and we ended up getting... It was early duck hunting season and we got teal, which for anyone who knows teal, it's a smaller bird that's... They're one of the first birds to leave when it gets cold because they don't really build up any fat like some Northern birds would. And I remember that he prepared these ducks and we plucked them, which I'd never done before. It was pretty hard to do with really thin skin, but then he prepared them and he had wrapped him in bacon. He made this sauce and oh my goodness, I suppose if I would've gone to some fine restaurant, I would have a lot of money, but he was just a very good cook.
- Katie Johnson: Knew how to do it. Yeah.
- Mick Siems: Yeah. My own case, when it comes to deer, when you mentioned sausage, my family doesn't care much for the deer meat, but they like it when I turn it into jerky. And it's something you can do at home with the dehydrator and you can make it to whatever case do you want and deer jerky never goes to waste in our house.
- Katie Johnson: Yeah, that's always handy to have on hand. I would have to say my favorite is similar to what you described, pheasant cut into the little pieces wrapped in bacon marinated and put on the grill. One of my favorite appetizers, definitely. Mick, why do you think it's important that the Fish and Game Club chose to kind

of hop onto this? You mentioned it's part of your 100th anniversary celebration. Is this an outreach opportunity that you see as a club that's important to do?

Mick Siems: One of the things and this actually came from a conference I attended and it was a workshop, but it talked about the changes in sportsman, there's getting fewer and fewer people that are hunting and fishing. And so how do you attract new members to a club when you know few are doing what you like to do? But in the same sense there is this growing number of people that want to eat healthy and maybe they're... I don't know if it's a millennial kind of thing, but they're concerned about those antibiotics that are getting injected into meat. And something coming right from the wild, I think it's a way to maybe attract some people that one, they might want to learn how to hunt and fish. So our club is helping with that.

We're going to be hosting some workshops in 2020 to teach new people to the sport, hunting, fishing. But then I think there's those others that like the outdoors. They maybe aren't so against hunting, maybe they don't want to do it themselves, but maybe they want to go hiking, and the health benefits of being outside. And our club is involved in that too. And so a way to help grow our club I guess is a big reason to partner. Plus I don't mind, I like to eat it too. So I'm going to hopefully get some tips from our members, some of the things they're going to be bringing with.

Katie Johnson: Awesome. Are you prepared to share any idea what we might be able to sample that night?

Mick Siems: I do have a couple. Some myself, but I have to go get these. A friend he has, and he makes it out of Northern pike, but it's Northern pike, like a soup, but it's all-

Amera Nelson: Oh yum!

Mick Siems: And he makes everything out of his garden, so the vegetables are all freshly grown and he shared that recipe with me. So just as long as I can go catch some Northern, I'm going to be bringing in that.

Katie Johnson: Nice.

Mick Siems: We had one member, he's going to bring some goose and duck pastrami, kind of more like snack pieces. I know he went hunting up in Canada and he brought a lot of the birds back. He might have to figure out what to do with them. So he's doing that. One person is bringing some venison chili. Everyone has their favorite recipes for chili.

Katie Johnson: That sounds awesome.

Mick Siems: And another one, which I'm kind of curious on, he's doing a Mallard and Sandhill crane casserole. So I'm kind of envisioning some wild rice maybe and some duck. And I've never tasted Sandhill cranes, so...

Katie Johnson: Wow, that sounds fantastic. Anything else you want our listeners to know about what they can expect at next Tuesday's event? Either of you?

Amera Nelson: No, just I'm excited to be able to actually myself be introduced to the game club and just learn from them and see their recipes and be able to just share the health benefits of... I think there's such a circle effect between the physical, mental, social and what we're putting in our bodies. So yeah. I think it'll be great.

Katie Johnson: I think this topic is really spot on when it comes to incorporating so many of those components of wellness. I'm looking forward to it as well. How Wild is Your Game? The benefits of cooking with and eating wild game. Again, it's coming up this next Tuesday night, January 7th. Our Living Well series are held at the Fergus Falls Public Library community room. We'll start at 5:45 with the session going until about 7:00. And then again, the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club immediately after serving the great samples of some of their favorite recipes using all kinds of delicious wild games.

So if you would like more information or you would like to RSVP for this event, visit our website LRHC.org and go to the calendar, or you can give us a call at 736-8699 or shoot us an email to livingwell@LRHC.org. Amera Nelson, clinical dietician here at Lake Region Healthcare, Mick Siems from our Mill Street Residence and president of the Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club. Thank you both for being here and for putting this time and energy into what I know will be a great Living Well session next week.

Amera Nelson: Thank you, Katie.

Mick Siems: Yeah, thank you.

Katie Johnson: Amera, Mick, and Katie on Apple a Day today reminding you there is so much to do here, stay healthy for it. Have a great day.