

Alexander Ray Morales – 1987-2022

April 14, 1987-March 25, 2022

Alex is survived by his parents, Anna and Ray; his little brother, Joe; two nieces, Maya and Harmony; grandparents, Esther and Greg; his aunts, April, Jennifer and Irma; his uncle, Jason; his best friends, Bianca and Michael; and many cousins and friends who were a “bonus” family to Alex. He follows his Uncle Josh to heaven.

Alex graduated from Cascade High School and was raised and lived in Aumsville, Ore. He was loyal, forgiving, kind and funny. He was a proud member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. He really enjoyed pow-wows and being involved in his culture.

Alex will be remembered for making us laugh, tea parties with his nieces, always being there for friends and family in the times they needed him, the biggest die-hard Portland Trailblazers fan ever, skateboarding, fishing and most of all, for how he loved his family and friends.

He said, “Show your family and friends love and tell them ‘I love you’ often



because you never know when they will be taken from you.”

He will be desperately missed and forever in our hearts.

Services were held April 6 in Aumsville. If you would like to donate, please visit <https://gofund.me/149753cc>.



Courtesy photo

A BIG thank you to everyone from Siletz Tribal Head Start for all of your support

For more information about the Siletz Tribe, visit ctsi.nsn.us.

Love your liver and gallbladder: Help them get rid of the toxins you don't need

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RDN, LD, Head Start Consulting Nutritionist

Liver and gallbladder health is essential for optimal digestion, immunity and overall well-being. With the lifestyles and environment we face, our livers and gallbladders seem to struggle to eliminate toxins and fully support our health.

In past articles, I've written about spring as a time for cleaning up and detoxifying with bitter greens like dandelion. This year, I'm inspired to focus on loving my liver and gallbladder.

In my role as consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer nutrition information for families. The focus for this article includes understanding, taking care of and protecting your liver and gallbladder as acts of love.

Your liver and gallbladder are super important organs. Your liver is located on your right side behind your lower ribs. It is a very busy organ that does more than digestion and detoxification (getting the stuff out of our bodies that doesn't belong). It is also an organ for the immune system.

Your gallbladder is a little pear-shaped pouch tucked behind the liver and its main job is to store the bile that the liver makes to help the body digest the fats we eat, plus it helps eliminate toxins.

When they function well, they provide essential benefits. When functions are not working well, things can go wrong.

In today's world, there seem to be many problems and diseases of the liver. One in every 10 Americans is affected by liver disease such as fatty liver, hepatitis and cancer. Obesity and diabetes are risk factors for nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

Many people with gallbladder problems have painful stones. Frequently the gallbladder is removed, which requires the body to work harder.

Many of us live unbalanced lives that impair liver and gallbladder function. This can also affect other systems, such as our brain and therefore, our decision-making. It can affect our mitochondria. It can trigger constant immune alertness. These may lead to disease, fatigue, obesity and decreased metabolism.

Symptoms of an imbalanced liver or gallbladder may include abdominal pain, jaundice, nausea, vomiting, weakness, confusion, enlarged liver, bloating, gas, dark urine, bruising easily, excessive sweat, constipation and mood swings.

The benefits of a well-functioning liver and gallbladder include increased energy, better mood, fewer digestive issues, stronger immune systems and clearer skin. These benefits are because your liver and gallbladder are better able to eliminate toxins.

So, how do we love our livers and gallbladders? How do we live a balanced life? It is essential that we have a framework to appreciate, nourish and support our liver and gallbladder organs so they can clear toxins and allow us to be healthy and functional.

Many important tips in the literature are food- and nutrition-based. It may be frustrating to realize that most of these are the same habits that are mentioned over and over in my articles.

This maybe is good, however. Healthy nutrition habits are the foundation of health. We don't need separate habits for separate body parts.

The main point regarding these organs is that when they are not well-supported, they become “sluggish.” This means that they do their important jobs less well. They can struggle a long time. We can feel minor symptoms without knowing just how hard these organs are working. That is, until it becomes serious.

Important foods to nourish the liver and gallbladder include whole real foods, such as dark green leafy greens, vegetables, clean protein and healthy fats to help

lower insulin resistance and support detox. It is important to eat colorful vegetables from the rainbow that are high in fiber, high in antioxidants, full of enzymes, low in sugar and low in toxins.

Fiber helps reduce the risk of gallstones. Great sources of fiber include sprouted beans; legumes, such as lentils; nuts and seeds; and fresh vegetables, such as beets, artichoke and dandelion greens.

Enzyme-rich foods include asparagus, bok choy, celery, citrus, green apples, kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut, garlic and plums. Also important are cruciferous and sulfur-containing vegetables, such as Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, watercress, mustard greens and broccoli.

Healthy fats include organic coconut oil, olive oil, raw nuts and seeds. Bitter foods and herbs are very important and were discussed in my March 2014 article.

Teas can help your liver and your gallbladder while also making sure you are hydrated. Apple cider vinegar, dandelion tea, milk thistle tea and chamomile tea help cleanse the liver and gallbladder. Herbs for detoxification include caraway, dill seeds, rosemary, thyme, cumin, basil, poppy seeds, oregano, black pepper, cilantro and curcumin-containing herbs such as turmeric, safflower or yellow ginger.

How do we protect our liver and gallbladder? We need to get rid of the junk, such as the toxic chemicals, sugar, hydrogenated and rancid oils, and GMOs (genetically modified/engineered foods) because that junk really destroys the liver.

Our food choices, increased stress, lack of sleep, lack of exercise, increased negative social environment, excessive toxins and excessive screen time fuel a chronic state of inflammation. Some toxins are in our foods and others are outside of our food supply.

All toxins accumulate day by day, little by little, and this high toxin load impairs liver function and forces the liver to hold on to this toxic stuff that should have been

removed. This results in damaging the mitochondria and the metabolism, making your body numb to insulin and leptin, increasing blood sugar issues, increasing insulin resistance and leading to difficulty with losing weight.

Another approach to protection that we will do well to remember is to manage the four S's – stress, sleep, social and spiritual health. These must also be in balance to protect our liver and gallbladder. If we're living a life of negativity, it can actually impair our detoxification.

In summary, acts of loving your liver and gallbladder include understanding their functions, taking care of them with nurturing foods and protecting them from harm. If they become sluggish, problems occur. When they function well, we also function well!

For additional information on holistic approaches for kids to thrive in spite of today's challenges, I like the approach Dr. Madiha Saeed, MD, shares on this topic. She is a board certified integrative holistic family physician and bestselling author of *The Holistic RX: Your Guide to Healing Chronic Inflammation and Disease*; *The Holistic RX for Kids: Parenting Healthy Brains and Bodies in a Changing World*; and the first functional medicine children's book series called *Adam's Healing Adventures*.

Her website is <https://holisticmommd.com/>, where you can also find free information and the Holistic Kids Show podcast, hosted by her kids, where they interview the biggest names in the health care industry.

Please know that Siletz Tribal Head Start offers nutritional support at no cost to Head Start families. This usually occurs over the telephone. If you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child or want to discuss family nutrition concerns, please contact your teacher or the director and ask to speak to the nutritionist.