

Why Choose Naturopathic Medicine?

Naturopathic medicine is a system and philosophy of medicine that has been around for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. Before the advent of "conventional" medicine, which uses a wide variety of drugs and surgical procedures, almost every doctor learned how to use herbs, minerals, homeopathy, and other natural methods to treat disease. Since the early 1900's and with the discovery of antibiotics, usage and public knowledge of naturopathic medicine has declined. This was most likely due to the "quick fix" nature of many of the new drugs developed and increased safety of surgical procedures. Diseases such as influenza and measles, which today are generally nuisances and easily treated in most people, were very scary and sometimes life threatening in these earlier times. The plague literally plagued people. Today we are blessed with better opportunities for proper nutrition, hygiene, and information about these diseases, all of which lessen the threat of many of the more common diseases becoming life threatening. The attraction that people had towards conventional medicine was and is understandable. Treatments that decrease symptoms of a disease are often well received by patients who are dealing with a troublesome condition. Most advances in technology are viewed as progress and people want the best, especially where their health or that of their loved ones is concerned. The problem that came with this flux towards conventional medicine was that it was new and no one knew what the side effects or long-term effects of using synthetic drugs would be. Also, most people abandoned the more natural methods of health care and stopped caring for themselves in a way that would keep them strong and vital. Instead they began using pills and surgery as "fixes" when things went wrong. They began to eat more processed foods that have fewer vitamins and minerals. Our environment became more polluted. Most doctors know little about nutrition, how or what to eat, or what to do with people affected by the environment. As well, the more scientific medicine gets, the less people understand it. This leads to people feeling ignorant about health matters and leaving all the power in their doctor's hands.

So, here we are today. When people feel sick or know something is wrong, they make an appointment and usually get a prescription. If that doesn't work, another prescription is tried. If a person is lucky, they get sick very infrequently and live healthy lives. Complications arise when the treatments given don't work or cause side effects that need another treatment to lessen them. What happens if you have allergies, asthma, and diabetes? How many prescriptions do you take? What if the drugs given interact with each other or cause a nutritional deficiency? What about the people who are on a drug for the rest of their lives? What about people with chronic diseases that have been told they have no cure but the symptoms can be "managed"?

What causes many of the above problems is the philosophy of the medicine used. The focus should not be (however contrary it may sound) how to get rid of whatever ails you, but why it began. If you can find out what causes your disease and why it began for you, it is entirely possible to foster your health in such a way that your body heals itself. It does little good to get rid of an ear infection in your child if it returns again. Why take an antiviral daily to suppress herpes outbreaks when this can be done with lifestyle and natural methods that do the same thing while enhancing your immunity? If you have advanced heart disease, diabetes, or cancer, what feelings of hope do you have that your life can be enhanced? If you take medications daily, perhaps in increasing doses, for the rest of your life with your only hope to have better or stable lab test results, that doesn't sound like the quality life you could be having. Did you know that with changes to your lifestyle and natural therapies you could increase the energy you feel as well as possibly reverse many of the damaging changes you now live with?

There are natural treatments for every complaint. I once heard from a wise doctor, "There are no incurable diseases, only incurable people". What he meant was that every case of cancer may not be curable, but it is possible to cure cancer. No condition is incurable. What happens in treatment is more a factor of the person, the nature of the disease, and other variables, and not so much which disease is being treated. It is more difficult, of course, to treat diseases that are long-standing, severe, or in other ways complicated. But that does not mean it can never be done. If a person does not want treatment and they get something from being in the place they are at, that makes recovery all the more difficult. It is much easier to treat conditions when they first start and when the person wishes to be well. But still there are no guarantees.

What tends to work best for most people is a multifaceted approach to treating their condition. First, treat the whole person. Find out what their needs are and treat them physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, as they need it. Treat their whole body. Migraines, arthritis, and urinary infections can be related and not separate diseases. A person may not need antibiotics or removal of an organ, they may need something that seems entirely unrelated. The toddler with constant stomach pains may not need medication; he may need to change day cares. Try to understand what is going on for the person.

Second, treat them in such a way as to increase their vitality. The goal is to increase the healing response within so that the body becomes healthier and reverses the disease process naturally and in its time (if this is possible). It may be necessary to provide some symptomatic relief, but the goal of a treatment should not be to simply suppress the symptoms. Just because symptoms are gone does not mean that the disease is not there. The goal is a complete cure and no return of the condition (sometimes this is possible, at other times it is not). Your body holds an incredible healing force that

wants to keep you in harmonious balance at all times. Think of the miracle of healing a broken bone. Think of how microorganisms cause your lungs much distress in bronchitis, yet how well you breathe and how complete the cure when the body is done healing that condition. Think of the miracle of life itself. If disease arises when we hinder the body in maintaining its perfect balance, then restoring conditions of balance will help our bodies to heal themselves. After all, it is not the antibiotic that heals you. The antibiotic simply kills off enough bacteria to allow your body the upper hand. Ask yourself if the body shouldn't have the upper hand to begin with. If you really do need antibiotics, what is causing the bacteria to gain the upper hand?

Naturopathic medicine strives to restore balance by removing any obstacles keeping your body from healing itself. Physicians using this medicine understand the importance of treating each person individually and in a way that helps restore their natural vitality. They also try to use the most gentle yet effective treatment possible to avoid causing side effects or interactions between treatments. Naturopathic physicians also recognize the importance of using conventional medicine when it is necessary. They will also use appropriate lab work, x-rays, and other tools for diagnosis and tracking when necessary. As all physicians, they frequently will refer a complicated condition to providers who can give the patient the best care along with the natural treatments. Naturopaths regard the wants and needs of their patients highly. A patient is encouraged to share their goals and take an active part in their healthcare. Consultations and treatments are generally longer than those with a conventional practitioner so questions can be addressed and a healing relationship established.

For more information or questions on related topics, please visit www.MyWebND.com. Get all your health questions answered from a licensed Naturopathic physician without the wait for an office visit. Well-researched, reliable information is now available and easy to find.