

Natural Health Series

Supplements for Vitality



The Definitive Guide to
Natural Remedies

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Disclaimer

No information in this book is intended to be a replacement for medical advice. Any person with a condition requiring medical attention should consult a qualified health professional.

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Dedication

While this book may assist the victims of disease,
I dedicate it to the seekers of health and to those who help
them rediscover it.

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PROLOGUE

Wellness Medicine a new paradigm. . .

It is comforting to view the normal state of life as being in good health. "Vita" (life) is also the root in "vitamin", a status conferred upon a nutrient only after it is proven to be absolutely "essential to life" and without which a recognized disease process will ensue. "Vitality" encompasses "good health" and well-being, that is, a state of being free from disease. At the opposite end of this spectrum is the disease state. The problem of disease is approachable from either end of this spectrum.

The Illness approach

The dominant medical system in the West ("allopathic medicine") attempts to cure disease once it has become established, in other words: the illness approach. A single treatment, or protocol (typically a medicinal formula, "a pill for every ill") is matched with the disease, regardless of the patient who has the disease. A clinical diagnosis is required before treatment can begin.

The Wellness approach

The *alternative* approach, primarily seeks to maintain the state of health (*homeostasis*) and, thereby, prevent disease by denying it the opportunity to take hold. If this approach appears to be

faltering, such as the characteristic beginnings of a cold, or fails altogether, with a chronic condition, like arthritis, natural therapies are intensified to lend additional support to the natural, or innate, healing system of the body. This approach may depend more upon the patient who has the *disease* than the disease itself. It may, more formally, be termed the *vis medicatrix naturae*, which means the way of natural medicine, the founding principle of naturopathy. Intervention may begin without a clinical diagnosis in the allopathic sense. Indeed, that is the point. Ideally, the disease will not develop.

This leads to communication difficulties between the groups. Cynically, the allopathic doctor will scoff at a patient's treatment, for a disease they don't have. While a patient's anecdotal report of being cured will be summarily dismissed. For his part, the naturopathic doctor will not consider the suppression of symptoms (whatever the diagnostic label may be) by a prescription drug to represent a cure, in the fullest sense, since it does not provide vital health.

Transition from Illness to Wellness

This decade is witnessing a transition from the illness approach towards the new paradigm of wellness medicine. The defining moment may be conveniently dated to 1993 when a landmark study appeared in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. The lead author, Dr. David Eisenberg, a Harvard-based physician who had enjoyed an eye-opening medical education in China, revealed for the first time just how extensive the "alternative underground" had become.

One out of every three Americans was a consumer, involving more than thirteen billion dollars. [The most recent estimate is even higher, it's a 50:50 split, the average American is as likely as not to use alternative medicine.] Indeed, patient visits to alternative practitioners exceeded visits to primary care physicians.

The general public had sufficient conviction (delusion?) to pay over ten billion dollars out of their own pockets! Where would mainstream medicine be without insurance coverage?

As Western technology improves, we are, paradoxically, reaching the point at which traditional approaches no longer seem so ridiculous. They just existed on a level outside our parameters of comprehension. It is easier to ridicule something we do not comprehend, than to admit our inability to comprehend it. If we were previously unable to build a machine that would measure "it", it was convenient to be dismissive and say that "it" did not exist. Once we have the capability of building the necessary machine and find that it does exist, after all, we are forced to make a paradigm shift. They were right, all along. It is both perplexing and tantalizing at the same time to ponder that "The ancients knew it already!"

New Medicine

There are rumblings of a New Medicine, within which our increasingly cosmopolitan society can tap into the wisdom of ancient cultures from around the world in a symbiosis with modern technology. (Notably Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurvedic medicine and exotic remedies from the wilds of Africa and the Amazon). Indeed, the lifetime of skill refinement required to perform a pulse diagnosis, or exude Chi energy, may now be accessible to an interested technician, or even directly to the client, via computer technology.

The Eisenberg study may have revealed more about the therapies of the future than most of us were able to discern, initially. Exercise (26%) and prayer (25%) were utilized the most, while megavitamin therapy (2%) and herbs (3%) seem insignificant, which is as it should be!

Our future health lies not with increased supply of the technology, including: refined transplant techniques; additional organs (from pigs, or clones etc.); more powerful drugs (to

overcome rejection); or even finding the funds to pay for every eligible person; but in lowering demand, notably from less self-abuse (and better dietary practices!).

It is abundantly clear that people cannot be well if they are inactive, nor if they are spiritually unsatisfied. Does this mean that personal trainers and priests should be covered by health insurance? It would probably be a sound investment!

Realistically, if people are well, their work will be more productive and, hopefully, rewarding; which, combined with lower expenditures on illness, should provide each of us with more discretionary income to cover what may be regarded as wellness "luxuries" like herbs, vitamins and manual therapies.

Wellness Means Taking Responsibility

The deeper one delves into the concept of healing from a holistic perspective, the more apparent it becomes there is more to healing than going passively to a doctor, expecting to be cured. Attaining health is not simply a matter of saying, "Here doctor! This is my body. It is sick. Go ahead and heal it, while I go on with my life as usual, with all its inherent stress, bad diet, lack of exercise, etc. etc..."

This attitude, of abandoned responsibility on the patient's part and godly power on the part of the doctor, goes back to the reductionist thinking of Rene Descartes. His dictum, "I think therefore I am," crystallized the concept of separating *res cognitae* (the realm of the mind) and *res extensa* (the realm of matter). His perception of the material world has so permeated our culture that we now commonly view the human body as an elaborate machine made up of assembled parts. The culture of dependency suits modern medicine, with its specialists, (each of whom cures a particular part of the body); aided and abetted by patients who have been conditioned to lose faith in their own ability to heal themselves. They have come to rely on medication and even surgery to overcome any self-inflicted, or acquired,