

The Opportunity of Health

Health costs for our country are so expensive that our government is beginning to realize the value of prevention as an approach to health management. Formerly and currently entrenched in a disease-treatment paradigm, a shift has been created by the consumers of health care who now demand information on how to prevent illness and disease. You could call it the 'Armchair Wellness' movement. Consumers of health care are finding out through various books and Internet resources how to self-diagnose, treat, and maintain their health conditions.

In response, Medical Doctors and Hospitals are making procedures more informative and patient-friendly in progressive ways. At this stage, we can't afford not to become active in our health care and seek out preventative services and information. Cleansing and detoxification are one of the most important parts of the preventative approach. Herein lies the opportunity for promoting a preventative health care system, one person at a time through systematic, individualized support, detoxification, and ongoing maintenance of your mental and physical health.

In discussing prevention, the adage "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" comes to mind. Do we really understand this? Considering the inflation of the health risks and toxins we are all exposed to from the environmental air and water, and from the ingestion of processed and refined foods, I suggest the adage be modified to "A pound of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Practicing in a prevention-based health paradigm starts with you and I. Naturopathic Doctors are trained to treat according to a health-promotion paradigm and use the principle of prevention as cure for many facets of your lifestyle. In contrast to conventional medical intake assessments, I conduct an initial assessment, verbal interview and physical examination of your mind, body and spirit. This process is the keystone to understanding who you are so that individualized care is given to meet your health promotion goals. As your Naturopathic Doctor my role is one to coach you to providing your own proactive health care based on healthy and informed choices.

Your vitality and your ability to heal yourself are dependent on the time you take to achieve your health goals. Your vitality is the overall life force you have within you as a foundation for your mental and physical energy. Your ability to heal yourself is both an emotional and physical task that requires education and understanding of your body's processes. If you feel that you do not have a great foundation for healing, the following information is helpful to understanding how you can improve. It is the intention of every Naturopathic Doctor to help you fundamentally improve your health. You will learn about the systems of your body and how they are/are not working, and how to facilitate healing and improved vitality.

Every natural healing system, especially Ayurvedic and Naturopathic Medicine recognizes the profound contribution of toxins to disease. Even conventional medicine is aware of this problem and has coined the term *xenobiotic* to describe toxins that come into our bodies from the environment. A surprising amount of research has gone into documenting the validity of toxicity, formally defined as: "*The presence in the body of various types of toxic chemicals, heavy metals, partially broken down metabolites,*

bacterial toxins, and bacterial cell wall components that is correlated with specific diseases and syndromes.” The most common type of toxicity is found in symptoms of intestinal dysbiosis where the bowels contain excessive levels of toxin-producing bacteria and inadequate amounts of health-promoting bacteria. It is typically caused by the use of broad-spectrum antibiotics, from eating contaminated foods, from not being breast-fed, and/or from a low fiber diet. The effects of intestinal dysbiosis are diverse and range from chronic fatigue to autoimmune disease. It is clear that detoxification is necessary.

The Liver and the Bowels are the primary organs of detoxification. The liver is responsible for eliminating circulating toxins from the blood or the bowel via processes that chemically convert them to less toxic forms or by disassembling them. After this the altered toxin is excreted from the body by the kidneys or the bowels. You can understand that if the bowels are not working properly and are laden with toxins, the liver becomes doubly challenged in keeping the bloodstream clear of toxins. It is understandable that the liver can become overloaded in such a toxic system, and the effects we display are varied. As toxic metabolites accumulate, we become progressively more sensitive to other chemicals, even those which are not normally toxic. The list of toxic system symptoms below gives you an idea of the effects:

- Headaches
- Foul smelling breath and stools
- Chronic fatigue
- Acne
- Anemia
- Autoimmune disease
- Cancer
- Gallstones
- Chronic allergies
- Multiple Chemical Sensitivities
- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Hives
- Chronic hepatitis

In comparing the conventional medical approach to treatment, the most common treatment of choice is drug therapy. While drug therapy may alleviate the symptoms, it doesn't recognize the ability of the body to heal itself nor does it recognize and treat the underlying cause of the symptoms. Worse yet, putting drugs into an already toxic overloaded system increases systemic toxicity, known as side effects. The result is an increase in the individual's chemical sensitivity. Fortunately we have an excellent immune system with defense enzymes, which the liver will produce as needed. The liver takes time to synthesize the enzymes and often the first exposure to a toxin is the worst because of the process.

To promote the health of your bowels and liver you can choose from many detoxification methods. Among the choices there are cleanses, homeopathy, saunas, hydrotherapy, juicing, fasting, mono-dieting, teas, herbal extracts and tablet preparations. The most important thing to do is to understand that cleansing is a three or four step process, and not simply the elimination aspect.

Initially it is important to promote your overall health – support your immune system such that any small colds and minor ailments are handled well by your system and are no longer an issue when you begin your detoxification. Then you are ready for the toxin elimination phase where you decrease your exposure to toxins in your food, water, air

and workplace. This is the warm-up to the actual detox and provides your body with a chance to promote and regulate bowel movements before the liver is prompted to sending toxins to the bowels, which is the next phase. If your bowel movements weren't optimal, then your system can again be overloaded and those symptoms of ill health and toxic overload return with a vengeance. It is often the reason why people stop cleanses after two to three days – they didn't prepare their bowels before starting the toxin elimination phase and the toxins weren't eliminated.

The third phase, as mentioned above, occurs as your immune system and liver and bowels are all supported under the guidance of your Naturopathic Doctor. Your liver does the work to eliminate any blood toxins and your bowels work to excrete these toxins. This is a time where you may experience lower energy levels and poor tolerance to normal stimuli. It is a natural process as your body eliminates neural and adipose toxins.

The fourth phase is one of returning to your daily lifestyle habits and tracking any symptoms that may develop as your body responds to potentially toxic substances from the air, the water, and the re-introduction of different types of foods. This is often the best phase of the detoxification process because it is where your energy is the highest it has been in years and you are clearly able to determine a connection between a stimulus (food/drink) and your body's response to it.

The beauty of the detoxification process is that I can tailor it to suit your lifestyle. It can range from a three to thirty days in length, depending on your time, stress and commitment levels. During the detoxification I am coaching and monitoring you to determine the optimal method of care that will bring the most success in this process. Rest assured you are meeting your health goals utilizing the cleansing and detoxification method as part of your preventative health care regime with the experience of your Naturopathic Doctor. You have successfully recognized and made use of the opportunity presented within the preventative health care paradigm.

Once you are finished the cleanse, you can experience greater energy levels, increased immunity against common colds, decreased or absent allergy symptoms, an improved ability to deal with stress and an overall improvement in your sense of being. This is your vitality renewed. This is your body's way of saying 'thanks, I needed that!' after you gave it the opportunity to remove those toxins. In return, your mind and body can then focus on remaining healthy and strong. In light of the ailing health care system that is overloaded with ineffective treatment procedures, you simply can't afford not to practise a pound of prevention with your daily health. Cleansing and detoxification are one of the most important parts of the preventative approach to health care and should be done 2-4 times per year depending on the individual's lifestyle, exposure, and risk factors.

Interested in finding out more information? Please do not hesitate to give the office a call and we will be happy to answer any of your questions.