

Health Matters

Great Smokies Medical Center of Asheville

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Prevention Strategies in Mainstream and Alternative Medicine

Is the time-tested adage “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” relevant in the discussion of disease prevention? The answer is a loud and clear “Yes!”

Prevention in a mainstream medicine model includes accident prevention (e. g. wearing seat belts, preventing falls), screening elevated blood pressure and blood sugar, weight normalization, smoking cessation, regular exercise, vaccinations, avoiding excess alcohol, cancer screening (breast exams, mammograms, PAP smears, prostate exams, PSA tests, colonoscopies, skin checks), diabetes screening, avoiding excessive sun exposure and using sun-screens.

The word *prevention* is often used in the mainstream medical model when the term *early intervention* would be more accurate. For instance, mammograms do not *prevent* breast cancer and PSA tests do not *prevent* prostate cancer. Regardless, early diagnosis and intervention are critical to tip the odds toward successful treatment outcomes.



The discriminating consumer of health-care is advised to keep an eye to the horizon for changes in these recommendations that may accomplish even earlier identification of disease more effectively and with less risk. For example, radiation exposure to the breast from annual mammograms can be greatly reduced by utilizing thermograms for breast cancer screening with occasional mammograms when indicated.

In contrast to the mainstream medical approach that uses knowledge of *disease*, holistically-oriented physicians use their knowledge of how the body naturally attains and maintains *health* (homeostasis) to develop health maintenance strategies that help promote the body’s optimal function as a means to prevent or delay the onset of disease.

What are the causes of disease from a natural, holistic viewpoint?

Any situation that results in abnormal function of the body’s cells has the potential, over time, to result in organic disease. Some of these causes cannot be

modified, including certain genetic diseases such as Huntington’s Disease, Achondroplasia (dwarfism), Sickle Cell Anemia, etc. However, most genetic contributors to disease, though less well-known than these dramatic conditions, are genetic glitches that require environmental triggers to manifest health problems including heart disease, osteoporosis, and immune system-related problems. The risk from these glitches can be modified by targeted nutrient therapies. Environmental, biological and metabolic triggers of disease include infections, infestations, malnutrition, toxins, emotional shock, injury, and stress.

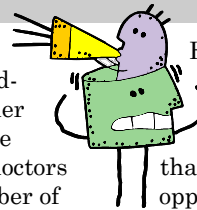
In addition to using the mainstream medical model, prevention in a holistic medical model also includes assessment of: digestion (Are hydrochloric acid, digestive enzymes, and friendly gut bacteria deficient?), nutrient adequacy (Are nutrient deficiencies perpetuating symptoms?), toxic influences on health (Are chemicals and heavy metals interfering with optimal functioning?), detoxification capacity (Are environmental (cont. p. 2)

Functional Symptoms vs. Organic Disease

Many, if not most, health complaints are termed *functional*, meaning that no known associated organic or pathological tissue changes can be found by the physician investigating possible causes of the symptoms. Functional symptoms can include headaches, fatigue, insomnia, irritability, abdominal pain, indigestion, low back pain, or simply not feeling well.

Organic or pathological disease are terms used to describe more advanced stages of disease that are accompanied by physical, cellular changes that can be identified by diagnostic testing. Examples of organic diseases include cancer, arthritis, heart disease, gastric ulcers, and emphysema.

Too often, diseases are diagnosed when they are more advanced, end-stage organic diseases. On the other hand, functional complaints can be too easily brushed aside by busy doctors who have an ever increasing number of drugs available to them that suppress functional symptoms—an approach that has been likened to covering up a car’s “check engine” light. People with functional complaints may feel frustrated when their doctor tells them that all their tests are normal. Doctors who are unable to establish physical evidence of organic disease may determine, rightly or wrongly, that the symptoms have psychological origins.



Holistically-oriented doctors find a patient’s reporting of functional symptoms, particularly when woven into the fabric of that patient’s life story, to be an opportunity to shed light on the earliest origins of disease.

Understanding the root causes of functional symptoms rather than suppressing them with drug therapies is one of the foundations of preventive healthcare.

When functional symptoms are understood by physicians who have a working knowledge of *health* in addition to knowledge of *disease*, a customized strategy for disease prevention can be developed.

Prevention, cont.

toxins interfering with normal function?), diet (Is the diet nutrient-dense or nutrient-sparse?), effects of chronic low-grade infections and infestations on immune health, hormonal deficiencies and imbalances, dental interferences to general health (Are dental material incompatibilities, cavitations or mercury amalgams obstructing health?), and the health consequences of trauma, emotions, and stress (Is your autonomic nervous system functioning on tilt?).

Disease prevention is best accomplished by defining and addressing contributors to disease, often accomplished through common-sense lifestyle and diet changes.

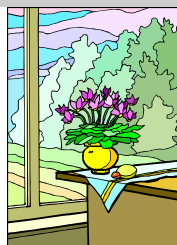
All content in this newsletter is intended to be informational and is not to be taken as medical advice or to replace medical care.

Creating a Healing Environment

Advances in physical sciences in the last 150 years have led to the human body being viewed as a collection of parts. That view has, in turn, led to medical specialization that treats only certain parts of the body (eye doctors, heart doctors, skin doctors, etc.) and the surgical removal or transplantation of parts.

Though this mechanistic view plays a very important role in modern medical treatment, it came into existence only very recently in a long, rich history of healing arts and veers from ancient wisdom in which the body, mind, and spirit were all integral parts of healing.

As a result, nurturing the body, mind and spirit is more relevant now than ever for a person trying to heal from illness.



Paying attention to environments in which you feel good and want to linger can help you define environments that can help facilitate your healing. Symbols of nature are often present in healing environments in the form of sounds, breezes, sunshine, plants, flowers, stars, trees, and vistas. Humor,

music, art, photography, and books can also nurture the mind and spirit, as can colors, lighting, and smells. Attention to what you eat and the physical and emotional environment in which you eat can all contribute to healing. Cleanliness, tidiness, and an environment free of chemical exposures all contribute to making a home conducive to the practice of spiritual practices including prayer, contemplation, or meditation.

Internal dialogue and emotions can either contribute to or detract from a healing internal environment. Scientific research of the body's physiological changes has shown powerful correlations between thoughts, emotions and the physical body. This research has blurred any perceived barriers between body, mind and spirit. As such, awareness of your negative self-talk and feelings and changing them, if need be, toward a more supportive, positive tone can contribute to your healing.

Even seemingly small changes in your internal or external environments can facilitate healing in surprisingly profound ways as they tap into your inherent ability to heal.

Dr. Wright Accepts New Position

Though sometimes it seems like just yesterday that Dr. Eileen Wright joined Great Smokies Medical Center, she will, in fact, be starting her ninth year with GSMC in July 2005.

Dr. Wright recently announced that she accepted a part-time position as Medical Director of Neuroscience, Inc. of Osceola, Wisconsin, effective August 1 of this year. She will continue seeing patients at GSMC on a part-time basis and will be taking patient appointments two days a week, usually Monday and Tuesday on a first come, first served basis.

Dr. Wright recommends that her patients

who cannot be accommodated in a timely manner due to her decreased availability starting August 1, 2005, see Pam Shuler, D.N.Sc., C.F.N.P. at GSMC for their healthcare needs.

Many of Dr. Wright's patients already know or have seen Dr. Pam and have first hand knowledge of her 22 years of experience and expertise in alternative healthcare.

Any questions about Dr. Wright's schedule changes can be directed to our receptionists at the front desk.

We wish Dr. Wright all the best in her new endeavor!

Healthy Wit and Wisdom

WARNING: Humor may be hazardous to your illness. ~ *Ellie Katz*

Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils. ~ *Hector Berlioz*

Thinking is the most unhealthy thing in the world, and people die of it just as they die of any other disease. ~ *Oscar Wilde*

I like long walks, especially when they are taken by people who annoy me. ~ *Fred A. Allen*

Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. ~ *Albert Einstein*

Problems are only opportunities in work clothes. ~ *Henry Kaiser*

Live out of your imagination, not your history. ~ *Stephen Covey*

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself. ~ *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Half of the modern drugs could well be thrown out the window, except that the birds might eat them. ~ *Martin H. Fischer (1879-1962), German physician*

Everything that can be invented has been invented." ~ *Attributed to Charles H. Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Patents, 1899*

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. ~ *Mark Twain*

When I grow up, I want to be a little boy. ~ *Joseph Heller*

It is well known that the older a man grows, the faster he could run as a boy. ~ *Red Smith, U.S. sportswriter*

Intellectual tasting of life will not supersede muscular activity. ~ *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"Happiness? That's nothing more than health and a poor memory. ~ *Albert Schweitzer*

Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in hospitals dying of nothing. ~ *Redd Foxx*

You must be the change you wish to see in the world. ~ *Gandhi*