

What Causes Ill Health?

“When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot become manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.”

—Herophilus, physician to Alexander the Great

Imagine a building on fire. It begins when a faulty extension cord starts to smolder. Smoke rises, and flames spread. Disease is like the building on fire; the disease process begins long before symptoms can be felt or signs diagnosed by a doctor, just as the fire begins long before the flames are shooting from the building. The purpose of natural medicine is to change the course of ill health toward promotion of good health. Below is a list of the most important factors that lead to ill health and disease.

- 1. Toxicity or the presence of harmful substances** in our air, water and food is probably the most harmful factor to our health. The average American will come in contact with over 70,000 chemicals during their lifetime, of which 20,00 are known carcinogens (cancer causing). In addition to external toxic exposure is the problem with internal (inside the body) toxicity buildup due to improper elimination of the two to four pounds of daily metabolic waste.

Toxins are undoubtedly the greatest threat to our good health.

Just how prevalent are toxins in our environment?

What can I do to minimize the ill-effects of internal and external toxicity and prevent further damage?

- 2. Interference to the nervous system** or what is called a Vertebral Subluxation Complex is another health diminishing factor. A malpositioned or abnormally functioning vertebra has been proven to interfere with the normal conduction of nerve impulses and can affect every cell, muscle and organ in the body. Chiropractors have been treating this malady successfully for years and restoring the health of millions men, women and children via traditional chiropractic treatment.

Subluxations of the vertebra are a common interference to health.

Are subluxations preventing you from being at peak health?

How can subluxations be detected and corrected?

- 3. Stress** negatively affects health on a number of different levels. Our bodies react to stress by producing certain hormones. These hormones, in particular cortisol, have a number of ill effects upon the body: Accelerated aging, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, immune system dysfunction, sleep disorders, obesity, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, and decreased memory. Learning strategies to deal with the emotional, chemical and physical effects of stress is part of a well-balanced health care approach.

Often what you eat isn't as bad for your health as what is eating you.

Is stress affecting your health on an emotional, physical or chemical level?

Can the stress effects of ill-health be halted and even reversed?

- 4. Nutritional deficiencies** as a major cause of ill health have finally caught the attention of scientists. In fact its role in cancer, heart disease, autoimmune diseases as well as chronic diseases is growing as research continues. Knowledgeable individuals involved in nutrition and natural medicine have warned us for years of the ill-effects of consuming foods that are devoid of nutritional value due to depleted soils, processed and fast foods as well as

the consumption of foods that have a negative effect on our nutritional status such as preservatives, sugar, white flour, and food additives.

Ill-health is frequently the absence of something good rather than the presence of something bad!

Is your body getting the nutrients it needs?

How do you achieve health maximization?

5. **Dehydration** or lack of water is another essential ingredient in the development of ill-health and disease. Every cell in the body is dependent on the presence of water as part of its essential ingredient list. As the human body is 75 to 80 percent water, it makes sense that the supply needs to be replenished on a regular basis for good health. Coffee, tea and pop may contain water but are not an acceptable substitute for water. The sugars, caffeine and other chemicals found in those beverages actually act to further deplete the body's supply of water.

Adequate intake of water is a vital ingredient for good health.

How is water used by the body?

Are you getting enough water to promote good health?

6. **A lack of, or inconsistent spiritual beliefs** can have profound health- demoting or health- promoting implications. Individuals who have firm religious convictions have been shown in a number of studies to suffer fewer life threatening illnesses, recover more quickly from major illness, and live longer, happier lives. It was also found that it was just as important for one's beliefs to be congruent with one's actions.

Spiritual health is important to our overall health.

Are your spiritual beliefs and actions congruent?

What are the health benefits to a consistent spiritual life?

7. **Lack of exercise** is a well-accepted deterrent to good health. Exercise is always included in lists of health promoting activities, and it should be. Unfortunately, many people confuse physical activity at work and home with exercise. It is felt that if they are on their feet all day that this is the same as exercise. Exercise is a controlled activity designed to work a particular body part in a specific manner. Other than exercise for tone and flexibility, cardiovascular exercise is the most common form of exercise, and is best as a sustained activity of a 20-minute minimum.

Lack of exercise plays a role in the development of most chronic diseases.

How much exercise do you need?

Is one type of exercise better than another?

8. **Lack of sunshine** can lead to many common ailments, such as heart disease, increased cholesterol and blood pressure, and weakened immune system. Have you ever noticed how a cat or dog enjoys lying in the sunshine? Adequate sunshine is an important aspect of good health, however, we are taught to hide from it. In natural medicine it is understood that in a diet restricted in hydrogenated oils combined with adequate amounts of specific nutrients, moderate amounts of sunshine will not increase skin cancer.

Sunshine can help to improve physical and emotional health factors.

How can you reduce the negative effects of sunshine?

Doesn't sunshine cause cancer?

9. Adequate rest is as important as air, water and food to our good health. Sleep acts as a generator to recharge our batteries and rejuvenate itself, allow the cleanup systems to do their work, and allow the repair systems to work efficiently in preparation for the renewed activity of a new day. Sleep provides rest for the heart, muscles and brain. A short nap during the day has been shown to be beneficial also. Therefore, when you are tired, rest.

Resting is not a sign of laziness, it is an intelligent use of time.

What are some of the other benefits of rest?

How much rest do I need?

10. Electromagnetic fields (EMF) from electrical appliances, power lines, home wiring, etc. have been shown in a number of studies to be associated with cancer, birth defects, headaches, as well as a host of other health conditions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) warns, "There is reason for concern" and advises "prudent avoidance." In addition to the short and long-term health concerns, in a few short years it is possible that homes located near high-energy fields will be impossible to sell as public awareness and knowledge of EMF's grows.

EMF's will be as significant in the new millennium as herbicides and pesticides were in the old.

What are some of the appliances in my home that I should be aware of?

How do I find out if I have a potential problem?

11. Traditional medicine has declared an all out war on genes and their role in disease. It is interesting to read the material that admits genes at best play an approximate 15% role in the development of disease. In natural medicine we study the expression of genetic potential. For example, in two people with the breast cancer gene, one will get breast cancer while one will not. Valuable information is gained from following the diet and lifestyle of the cancer-free individual.

Genes do not play as large a role in health expression as we might be led to believe.

How do I minimize my exposure to the harmful things in life?

How do I maximize my exposure to and intake of the beneficial things in life?