

Wellness in your **LIFE**

February, 2009

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... Mary has permission to ...

Taking Control of Your Wellness

For the past 30 years, Mary (not her real name) had not been able to leave her home for any length of time. She had been experiencing chronic fatigue and debilitating pain - all the time.

Her medical doctors ran test after test, approaching \$250,000.

They could not find a real problem. Diagnoses had run from fibromyalgia to leukemia to irritable bowel syndrome.

In the final analysis, all they could come up with was “it’s all in your head. You’ll just have to live with it.”

Was it all in her head? If the doctors’ tests can’t find anything, does that mean

there is nothing “real” going on? Was she just another hypochondriac with nothing better to do?

As a child, Billy didn’t mind going to the doctor - too much. The family doctor would play games and make funny noises when looking in his ears and throat. Billy didn’t like getting shots, but the doctor always gave him a sucker afterwards.

Billy grew up trusting his family doctor and when he was old enough to have his own family, he took his children to see the doctor and followed his instructions without question. After all, the doctor was trained in these matters and Billy wasn’t.

Our conventional, allopathic medical system separates the body into individual components or “bodily systems” that have clearly defined characteristics,

Look Inside
for our

Valentine Special

Feb. 6 - Dr. Cheney and Dr. Buchanan will be out of the office. Dr. Anderson will be available for patients.

Feb. 7 - CASA chocolate auction at Huck Boyd Center.

Taking Control of Your Health

(continued from page 1)

sets of symptoms, and accepted treatments.

(continued on page 2) We have also been assured by our parents and other adults, that when we have some aches or pains or other medical problems, to always seek medical help from a “licensed” doctor.

Our laws in this country tell us a doctor has to have an approved license, and certain medications have to have the permission of one of these licensed doctors before we are allowed to take them.

What happens when a person has aches and pains that don't fit these accepted behavior patterns? What do we do when the person we have grown up trusting doesn't have the answers to help us?

Mary began exploring other alternatives. She went to her chiropractor, who started a series of treatments, including chiropractic adjustments. After six months of treatments, some relief was experienced, but not to her satisfaction.

Before moving on to another alternative treatment, her chiropractor ran some other lab tests to rule out some form of cancer or other major illness.

Cancer wasn't the problem either. But in the process, he did find some low grade systemic inflammation. Systemic or chronic inflammation is beginning to be identified as the underlying cause of many chronic diseases, even though the conventional medical field still has no tests for it, nor do they fully recognize it as a medical problem.

For women in particular, inflammation seems to be a problem during and after menopause, although the reason hasn't been fully explored yet. This may be a contributing factor to why 75 percent of autoimmune sufferers are women.

Mary's chiropractor continued with testing for food sensitivities. What he found was a gluten sensitivity that wasn't severe enough to be celiac disease, but never the less was causing her pain.

He restricted her to a gluten free diet. In two weeks, her pain that had lasted for 30 years was gone. Mary no longer had to worry about how long she would need to be away from the house, or what activities she could do.

Billy also had pains that could not be diagnosed easily. Because some of them persisted from the time he was a child, he continually went to his family doctor for relief. His doctor diagnosed one thing after another and gave him a different prescription every time he went to see him.

Now that Billy has grandchildren, he still has pains that are not easily diagnosed. Billy still goes to his family doctor (although it's not the same doctor he had as a child) and still gets an abundance of prescriptions. Billy has had some experience with alternative medical **(continued on page 3)**



Taking Control . . . (continued)

treatments, but still thinks he must go to a medical doctor first. They are the experts. They are the ones to go to.

We have been taught from childhood to trust our family doctors, and if they don't have a solution, a solution probably does not exist. We have also been taught that we are not the experts in this area and cannot take our health into our own hands.

Most of us are not experts in medical conditions and symptoms of diseases. There are some severe problems that can arise when we decide to "play doctor" ourselves. One, we can diagnose a wrong problem. If we think it might be a particular condition and it turns out to be more serious, we may be in trouble for treating the wrong problem and/or letting a more serious problem go untreated.

Another situation is over-diagnosing and over-treating. This is related to the misdiagnosis because we are still treating the wrong thing. All unexplained weight loss does not mean we have cancer. If we are feeling down or sad doesn't necessarily mean we are depressed. Having an earache does not have to be an ear infection.

Third, we may miss some of the conditions that indicate something serious is happening. We don't normally feel different if our blood sugar is elevated. If it gets too high and other symptoms kick in, we may feel out of sorts, but we can't tell what our blood sugar is unless we test it.

An over concern with symptoms is called hypochondria. When we become over concerned and spend a great deal of time searching the inter-

net to find out what is wrong, a new term has been coined - cyberchondria.

Self-diagnosis and self-treatment can cause problems. At the same time, each individual should be the expert of her own body. Mary knew something was wrong, even if the doctors couldn't find it.

In order for us to live a healthy life, we need to see that the "experts" are not always expert, and that it may take much dialogue and maybe a team effort to discover some problems and then to find the most appropriate solution.

Just because we don't have the "expertise" of a medical professional, doesn't mean we don't participate in our own health care. We need to see we have permission to take charge of our health and the responsibility to seek expert help and to follow up on that information.

In order for us to do so responsibly, we need to have enough of the right kind of information, so we can make wise choices. The internet is helping a great deal with hundreds of web sites available to give us information about most topics. But, because there is so much information to wade through, we need to screen it through the experts and ask enough questions so we understand what our choices are.

If you don't understand something, ask questions. Continue to ask questions until you understand. If your health care professional doesn't want to answer your questions, find one that will.

Managing Your Health

“Our healthcare system is broken and must be reformed.” We have been hearing this over and over from politicians, medical reformers, and even doctors. While the ground swell seems to be mounting, just how do we change our medical system so everyone benefits?

One place to start is a reality check on our basic assumptions about health care. As a society we assume that our present medical system is the best system and just needs some improvement. Two, we assume that it is naturally expensive and we need insurance programs to pay for it. Three, we assume that either the businesses or the government should pick up the greater portion of that insurance cost.

To get at what we are going to explore here, we need to break down the assumption that “our present medical system is the best system.” Where does illness and disease come from?

We learn in high school biology, based on our present allopathic medical system, that illness and disease primarily come from outside pathogens like bacteria and viruses entering our bodies and causing problems. We then need to treat the symptoms caused by these pathogens using medication or surgery and everything is better. We have followed this model for close to a century, and it has proven effective in a large number of cases.

Today, however, 75 percent of our medical conditions are considered chronic illnesses, which are not necessarily caused by bacteria or viruses, and

don’t respond easily to medication or surgery treating the symptoms.

Finding a more efficient way of paying for this treatment will not bring reform because the current treatments are not effective, and finding better treatment won’t happen until we get a better idea of what causes the chronic conditions.

Another assumption of our current allopathic medical system is that medical doctors are the best equipped to manage our health. When we have chronic conditions that don’t respond to traditional medicines and treatments, most medical doctors have not been trained to seek other solutions. Does this make them the most effective people to manage our health?

Since the individual is the one who should know his or her body the best (not always true, but usually), it would be logical to put the individual in charge of managing his or her own health care. This should be the case, **IF** the individual is knowledgeable about his own health conditions and informed about what alternatives are available and effective. There are some alternatives that are being proven to be effective for various chronic conditions. There are also many alternative treatments that are not.

Before the individual can manage his or her own health care, we need to change the assumption that we cannot manage our own health. Then we need to give ourselves permission to learn what we need to know to take charge. Then we can take the steps to learn about our **(continued on next page)**

own health so we can make rational decisions. Some actions can only be taken ourselves. Other actions will help us help our health care professionals be the most effective in the care they give.

Since most of us are not medical professionals, and may have limited time to research health issues, we need a system to help us with our responsibility of managing our own health. We need to find a person or persons who will put our best interests first, over and above that of the particular treatment method being used.

In our current health care system, this is called a primary care provider (PCP). This is the person we go to first, who exams us, treats what he or she can, and then refers us to the appropriate practitioner if other care is needed. The change we need in this system is to make sure this PCP is an advocate for the patient and not the medical system. If the PCP only advocates for her own system of treatment, he won't refer a patient to other alternative treatments even if that would seem to be appropriate.

The PCP needs to put the patient above the treatment modality, and he needs to be knowledgeable about other treatment methods, so she can make a reasoned referral if it is appropriate.

Maybe the patient needs surgery. Maybe the patient needs nutritional therapy. Maybe the patient needs exercise therapy or physical therapy. Maybe the patient needs chiropractic treatment. Maybe herbs will solve the problem.

Most medical PCPs will only refer to other medical specialists and not

to others outside the allopathic system. That is still putting the system over the patient.

As patients, we also need to know what other alternatives are available and where to find them. This may mean we need to seek out the appropriate PCP who can help us, or we may need to take matters more directly into our own hands.

The steps to take to manage our own health starts with getting at the correct problem. Getting an official diagnosis is key, as long as that diagnosis is correct and gets at the cause of the problem, not just the symptoms.

Once the underlying cause is determined (and this may take several different types of tests and/or trial and error), the appropriate treatment method can be determined. You may need more than one method working together with another, such as, nutritional therapy and exercise, or meditation and herbs, or chiropractic manipulation with medication.

It is then up to the patient to make sure the proper steps and methods are carried out. No medical treatment will work if you don't follow it.

If we manage our own care, we will see that our care is our responsibility and not the government's or our employer's. Following the appropriate method for chronic care should reduce the cost of health care in the long run and make it more effective.

We may still need insurance for those conditions that require surgery and long hospital stays, but even that could be modified if we treat causes rather than symptoms.

From the desk of . . .

Bruce Anderson, D. C.
Health Benefits of Kissing

"Kiss more, and kiss longer." That's what some researchers are advising as the health benefits of kissing are revealed.

Matthew Messina, DDS, a dentist and consumer advisor for the American Dental Association, says the extra saliva produced during kissing washes bacteria off your teeth, which can help break down oral plaque.

Bryant Stamford, PhD, director of the health promotion center at the University of Louisville notes kissing can help you lose calories.

"During a really, really passionate kiss," he says, "you might lose two calories a minute - double your metabolic rate."

Others claim that kissing exercises the facial muscles, which could keep you looking younger, or at least looking happier.

Stress relief is another health benefit of kissing. Psychologist Joy Davidson, PhD, likens kissing to meditation.

"It stops the buzz in your mind, it quells anxiety, and it heightens the experience of being present in the moment. It actually produces a lot of the physiological changes

that meditation produces," she says.

The fact that kissing leads to touching is also a good thing.

Touching and massaging release oxytocin, a hormone known to have a calming effect on the body.

(1) Indiana School of Medicine Article: Health Benefits of Kissing
Original Air date: February 21, 2004.

Kissing reduces anxiety, stress levels and helps lower blood pressure. During a kiss, more adrenaline is produced that causes your heart to pump more blood around your body. Frequent kissing has been shown to stabilize cardiovascular activity and reduce blood pressure and cholesterol.

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries as the heart pumps out blood. If this pressure raises and stays high over time, it can damage the body in many ways.

Blood pressure numbers include systolic (sis-TOL-ik), which is the top number and the diastolic (di-a-STOL-ik), the bottom number. Systolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart beats while pumping blood.

Diastolic blood pressure is the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats.



Valentine's Day Special

Purchase a 30 minute massage gift certificate for \$20 (regularly \$25) or a 60 minute massage gift certificate for \$37 (regularly \$45). Offer good for month of February, 2009



From the desk of . . .

Dustin S. Cheney, D.C., D.A.B.C.I.

This month we explored the idea that your health and wellness is your responsibility. The old saying "you can lead a horse to water..." will never hold more true than it does with healthcare. In the end, medicine saves lives. Chiropractic saves lives. Alternatives (so called in our culture) like acupuncture, herbal medicines, and eastern or oriental treatments save lives.

I believe that healing occurs from above down, then inside to out. That is a fundamental premise in chiropractic care. It means that for a person to get healthy he must start with an appropriately functioning nervous system. The information from the nervous system must get to the rest of the body. And the body must be able to utilize and follow the directions it is being given

“Real Medicine” Comes in Many Forms

Rather than thinking of massage as an indulgence, think of it as “real medicine” and give yourself permission to reduce your stress.

A car cuts you off on the highway, missing your front bumper by inches. You take a deep breath and your internal systems pump out a number of hormones preparing you for “fight or flight.” When you see you are okay and the offending car is speeding away, you start to relax and go on about your business.

One of the hormones released in this situation is cortisol. It helps prepare us for the appropriate action. Cortisol is released whether we have an immediate, physical threat like the car incident, or whether we feel stressed at work or home.

to express health. A break down in any of those areas will certainly cause disease.

As a Doctor, I have the responsibility of diagnosing my patients and treating them with the safest and yet most effective modality available.

Many times that is chiropractic manipulation, sometimes it is with the use of nutraceuticals (pharmacy grade nutritional and herbal supplements), and almost always it is with lifestyle changes.

My patients have a responsibility to me as well. They must communicate how their bodies are responding to me so that we have feedback about how therapy is progressing. This is the only way you will ever have **"Wellness in your Life..."**

If we don't have an easy way of releasing that stress, the cortisol builds up and can contribute to other problems in our body, leading to illness and/or chronic conditions.

One method of releasing stress is massage therapy. A study at the University of Miami School of Medicine, found that massage therapy can reduce cortisol and increase levels of serotonin and dopamine, neurotransmitters that make us feel better.

These researchers found this result for cases of depression, autoimmune conditions, immune studies including HIV and cancer, and studies on the reduction of stress on the job, the stress of aging, and pregnancy stress.

Other studies have found similar results and for other conditions such as insomnia, fibromyalgia, and even colds.

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