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Naturopathy

About Naturopathy

Naturopathic Physicians

Naturopathic Physicians (N.D.) are primary care practitioners trained as specialist in natural medicine. They are educated in conventional medical sciences, but are not orthodox medical doctors (allopathic physicians, or M.D.). A Naturopathic Physician has a Doctorate of Naturopathic Medicine degree from a four-year graduate level naturopathic medical college with admission requirements comparable to those of conventional medical schools. In addition to the standard medical curriculum, naturopathic students must do extensive coursework and clinical study in natural therapeutics.



Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathic Medicine is a unique and distinct system of health care that emphasizes the use of prevention and natural therapeutics. The doctors who practice naturopathic medicine, called naturopathic physicians (NDs), are trained to serve as primary care general practitioners who are experts in the prevention, diagnosis, management, and treatment of both acute and chronic health conditions.

Philosophy

Naturopathic Medicine is a distinctively natural approach to health and healing that recognizes the integrity of the whole person. Naturopathic Medicine is heir to the vitalistic tradition of medicine in the Western world, emphasizing the treatment of disease through the stimulation, enhancement, and support of the inherent healing capacity of the person. Methods of treatments are chosen to work with the patient's vital force, respecting the intelligence of the natural healing process. The practice of Naturopathic Medicine emerges from six underlying principles of healing. These principles are based on the objective observation of the nature of health and disease, and are continually reexamined in light of scientific analysis. It is these principles that distinguish the profession from other medical approaches:

The Healing Power of Nature. Vis medicatrix naturae The body has the inherent ability to establish, maintain, and restore health. The healing process is ordered and intelligent; nature heals through the response of the life force. The physician's role is to facilitate and augment this process, to act to identify and remove obstacles to health and recovery, and to support the creation of a healthy internal and external environment.

Identify and Treat the Cause. tolle causam Illness does not occur without cause. Underlying causes of disease must be discovered and removed or treated before a person can recover completely from illness. Symptoms are expressions of the body's attempt to heal, but are not the cause of disease. Symptoms, therefore, should not be suppressed by treatment. Causes may occur on many levels including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The Physician must evaluate fundamental underlying causes on all levels, directing treatment at root causes rather than at symptomatic expression.

First, Do No Harm. Primum no nocere Illness is a purposeful process of the organism. The process of healing includes the generation of symptoms, which are, in fact, an expression of the life force attempting to heal itself. Therapeutic actions should be complimentary to and synergistic with this healing process. The Physician's actions can support or antagonize the actions of the vis medicatrix naturae. Therefore, methods designed to suppress symptoms without removing underlying causes are considered harmful and are avoided or minimized.

Treat the Whole Person. The Multifactorial Nature of Health and Disease Health and disease are conditions of the whole organism, a whole involving a complex interaction of physical, spiritual, mental,

emotional, genetic, environmental, social, and other factors. The Physician must treat the whole person by considering all of these factors. The harmonious functioning of all aspects of the individual is essential to recovery from and prevention of disease, and requires a personalized and comprehensive approach to diagnosis and treatment.

The Physician as Teacher.Docere Beyond an accurate diagnosis and appropriate prescription, the Physician must work to create a healthy, sensitive interpersonal relationship with the patient. A cooperative doctor-patient relationship has inherent therapeutic value. The Physician's major role is to educate and encourage the patient to take responsibility for health. The Physician is a catalyst for healthful change, empowering and motivating the patient to assume responsibility. It is the patient, not the doctor, who ultimately creates/accomplishes healing. The Physician must strive to inspire hope as well as understanding. The Physician must also make a commitment to his/her personal and spiritual development in order to be a good teacher.

Prevention.Prevention is the Best "Cure" The ultimate goal of any health care system should be prevention. This is accomplished through education and promotion of life-habits that create good health. The Physician assesses risk factors and hereditary susceptibility to disease and makes appropriate interventions to avoid further harm and risk to the patient. The emphasis is on building health rather than on fighting disease.

Practice

Naturopathic philosophy serves as the basis for naturopathic practice. The current scope of naturopathic practice includes, but is not limited to:

Clinical Nutrition. That food is the best medicine is a cornerstone of naturopathic practice. Many medical conditions can be treated more effectively with foods and nutritional supplements than they can by other means, with fewer complications and side effects. Naturopathic Physicians use dietetics, natural hygiene, fasting, and nutritional supplementation in practice.

Botanical Medicine. Many plant substances are powerful medicines. Where single chemically derived drugs may only address a single problem, botanical medicines are able to address a variety of problems simultaneously. Their organic nature makes botanicals compatible with the body's own chemistry; hence, they can be gently effective with few toxic side effects.

Homeopathic Medicine. Homeopathic medicine is based on the principle of "like cures like." It works on a subtle yet powerful electromagnetic level, gently acting to strengthen the body's healing and immune response.

Physical Medicine. Naturopathic Medicine has its own methods of therapeutic manipulation of muscles, bones, and spine. ND's also use ultrasound, diathermy, exercise, massage, water, heat and cold, air, and gentle electrical pulses.

Oriental Medicine. Oriental medicine is a complimentary healing philosophy to naturopathic medicine. Meridian theory offers an important understanding of the unity of the body and mind, and adds to the Western understanding of physiology. Acupuncture theories, without the insertion of acupuncture needles, provide methods of treatment utilized in naturopathic medicine that can unify and harmonize the imbalances present in disease conditions, which, if untreated, can result in illness.

Naturopathic Obstetrics. Naturopathic Physicians provide natural childbirth care in and out-of-hospital setting. They offer prenatal and postnatal care using modern diagnostic techniques. The naturopathic approach strengthens healthy body functions so that complications associated with pregnancy may be prevented.

Psychological Medicine. Mental attitudes and emotional states may influence, or even cause, physical illness. Counseling, nutritional balancing, stress management, hypnotherapy, biofeedback, and other therapies are used to help patients heal on the psychological level.

Minor Surgery. As general practitioners, Naturopathic physicians do in office-minor surgery including repair of superficial wounds, removal of foreign bodies, cysts, and other superficial masses.

Principles

The Healing Power of Nature Nature acts powerfully through healing mechanisms in the body and mind to maintain and restore health. Naturopathic Medicine restores and supports these inherent healing systems when they have broken down.

First, Do No Harm Naturopathic Physicians prefer non-invasive treatments that minimize the risk of harmful side effects.

Find the Cause Every illness has an underlying cause, sometimes in lifestyle diets or habits of the individual. Naturopathic Physicians try to find and remove the underlying cause of disease.

Treat the Whole Person Health or disease comes from a complex interaction of physical, emotional, dietary, genetic, environmental, lifestyle and other factor. Naturopathic Physicians treat the whole person, taking these factors into account.

Preventive Medicine The natural approach to health care can prevent minor illness from developing into more serious or chronic degenerative diseases. Patients are taught the principles with which to live a healthy life. By following these principles they can prevent major illness.

Therapies

Clinical Nutrition Nutrition and therapeutic use of food have always been a fundamental aspect of naturopathic medicine. A growing body of scientific knowledge validates the naturopathic approach to diet and nutrition. Many medical conditions can be treated effectively using foods, cleansing diets, and nutritional supplements, with fewer complications and side effects of other treatments. Proper nutrition for the individual is the cornerstone of preventative medicine.

Homeopathic Medicine This powerful system of medicine is more than 200 years old. Homeopathic medicines act to strengthen the body's innate healing response.

Botanical Medicine Many plant substances are powerful medicines, with advantages over synthetic drugs. They are effective and safe when used properly, in the right combinations with other herbs or treatments. Several common prescription drugs are naturally derived and are ordered by Naturopathic Physicians and Medical Physicians alike. Scientific research in Europe and Asia is demonstrating that some plant substances are superior to synthetic drugs in clinical situations.

Naturopathic Body Work Naturopathic Physicians are trained in techniques of massage, manipulation, and physical therapeutics, which are used to treat injury and pain.

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