

Diet and Detox:

The Keys to Addressing Chronic Illnesses

“Preventing a health problem from becoming a chronic condition, and guiding clients to develop awareness of daily, harmful habits, are our highest priority,” notes Dr. Darlene Holloway, a naturopath and owner of Alternative Health Center of Cary.

“We have clients who come to us for preventive care—trying to avoid future illness—as well as others who haven’t maintained healthy lifestyles, are chronically ill, and realize they need help,” she says. “And our goal is to help them develop the healthy lifestyle and frame of mind—spiritual, physical, emotional—that are the foundation of health.”

DIET AND NUTRIENTS

“When working with a new client, we first check their diet, because a healthy diet is essential. But it’s not a simple process, because everyone is so different—and my ‘healthy diet’ may not be yours. For example, a client who has cancer may come in announcing that they’re consuming fruit smoothies every day—in an effort to eat well. A fruit smoothie might be a good idea for someone else, but for that client, it’s about the worst thing they could be doing, because it’s full of sugar—and sugar feeds cancer.”

Beyond diet, explains Dr. Holloway, “we want to evaluate the client’s vitamin and mineral levels by testing their stool, urine, and saliva. This helps us understand the client’s whole health picture.”

DETOXING

“After evaluating diet,” continues Dr. Holloway, “we make sure that the body is detoxing the inevitable build-up of toxins from drugs, diet, food, and hormones. We’ll do ion cleanses to draw those toxins out of all the organs. Then we’ll do colon hydrotherapy, because our goal is to make sure that cumulative toxicity is removed. Remember that the colon is nothing more than a sewer system, and toxic fecal matter that isn’t properly eliminated can be repeatedly reabsorbed. Especially for those battling chronic illnesses, this is a serious—and common—problem. I’d estimate that 80 percent of the people coming to us with chronic illnesses have a sluggish colon—which is basically constipation.”

The detox program is continued using the infrared sauna, she explains—which goes to a cellular healing level. “We also offer various forms of muscle therapy. If someone’s coming in with breast cancer or lymphedema, for example, lymphatic massages help drain it out of the body.”

DEALING WITH IBS

“Irritable bowel syndrome, or IBS, is a very common chronic disorder that affects the large intestine, with symptoms such as cramping, abdominal pain, bloating, gas, mucus in the stool—and diarrhea or constipation or both,” explains Dr. Holloway. “However, we have found that clients get labeled with IBS when they fail to get a proper diagnosis. More often, IBS is nothing more than classical constipation—going days, weeks, even a month, without a bowel movement. That build-up—constipation—will eventually express itself as diarrhea; and that pattern of build-up and release is often diagnosed as IBS.”

“Our goal—always—is for our clients to have regular bowel movements, which will prevent the development of the chronic IBS pattern. This involves colon hydrotherapy as well as working on diet—which plays a big role in constipation—as does stress. Symptoms are greatly improved by managing diet, lifestyle, and stress.”

HEART DISEASE AND DIABETES: SERIOUS CHALLENGES

“Treating the client suffering from chronic heart disease can be a significant challenge, depending on its severity,” notes Dr. Holloway. “But a comprehensive, holistic approach can have real benefits. Once we review their medical records and determine that we can proceed, we take it slowly.”

“Heart and gut are directly connected by the vagus nerve,” she points out. “We need to clean the colon because if the colon is toxic, those toxins go right back to the heart. So detoxing is critically important for those with heart disease. And we’ve had really good results with this approach—clients may even decrease or eliminate their blood pressure medicine while working in conjunction with their medical doctor. It makes sense: if the colon is functioning properly and not holding toxic fluids that affect the kidneys, the adrenals will start functioning more properly and blood pressure will drop.”

Diabetes is another chronic condition that responds to this approach, she says. “Our diabetic clients seem to do the same thing over and over, not knowing how to break that cycle. We help make them aware of their habits,” she notes. “And it’s vital that the colon is clean and functioning well. Colon cleansing helps the digestive process and the absorption of nutrients—which is of significant value in managing diabetes. Once they start feeling better, they want to continue.”



Dr. Holloway prepares a client for colon hydrotherapy.

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THE HAZARDS OF CHRONIC MEDICATION

“One of the biggest problems we see—especially in clients who are dealing with chronic conditions—is over-medication,” says Dr. Holloway. “It’s amazing: clients come here with bags full of medicine, not even knowing what they’re for. What often happens is someone will be prescribed two or three different drugs for a specific problem and they start having side effects. Then they get a prescription for another drug to counteract the side effects. Before they know it, they’re taking 8, 10, 12 different prescription medications, plus many over-the-counter treatments. This creates havoc with their digestive system, and often compromises the effectiveness of the meds they really need.”

“I’ll never counter what another health care practitioner has prescribed,” she says. “However, this is a problem we really want to address. We start with awareness—sitting down with the client, listing their medications and side effects, and why they’re on them. We try to help them develop awareness that maybe they can drop a medication that is clearly not resolving their problem; and we can identify non-pharmaceutical options to address their symptoms. And often—working with their

physician—we are able to help clients let go of many, even most of these drugs.”

Prescription drugs aren’t the only culprits, she notes. “We find that many over-the-counter medications and supplements are the source of chronic symptoms. Heartburn medications, for example, commonly have side effects that are also problematic. And, often, when someone has heartburn, the problem is too little acid, not too much. So, the antacid they take for relief is making the problem worse. Our approach is to educate our clients about the anatomy and physiology of digestion and the secretion of enzymes, and about the importance of live enzymes, pro-biotics (replacing the friendly flora), cultured vegetables, and aloe vera.”

For more information about colon hydrotherapy and other therapies offered at the center, contact:

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