

Welcome to Naturopathic Medicine

This handout has been prepared for the purpose of providing you, as a first time patient in our Naturopathic Medicine clinic, with information on what to expect as well as an introduction to the history, philosophy, and practice of Naturopathic Medicine.

History of Naturopathic Medicine

As a distinct health care profession Naturopathic Medicine is almost 100 years old. Its philosophy and therapies have their origins in the philosophy of Hippocrates and the healing wisdom of many cultures and times. At the turn of the century, practitioners of a variety of medical disciplines combined natural therapeutics in a unique way. They joined together to form the first Naturopathic medical societies.

Naturopathic medical conventions in the 1920's attracted more than 10,000 practitioners. Early in the 20th century there were more than 20 Naturopathic colleges, and Naturopathic physicians were licensed in a majority of the states.

Naturopathic Medicine experienced a decline in the 1940's and 50's with the rise and popularity of pharmaceutical drugs, technological medicine, and the widespread belief that these therapies could eliminate all disease. It has experienced a resurgence in the last two decades, as a health conscious public seeks out alternatives to conventional medicine. As a body of knowledge, Naturopathy continues to grow and evolve. As an organized profession, Naturopathic Medicine is committed to on-going research and development of its science and incorporates elements of scientific modern medicine.

The Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

The following principles are the foundation upon which Naturopathic Medical practice is built:

The Healing Power of Nature. *Vis Medicatrix naturae* Naturopathic Medicine recognizes an inherent ordered and intelligent self-healing process in the person. Naturopathic physicians act to identify and remove obstacle to healing and recovery, and to facilitate and augment this inherent self-healing process.

Identify and Treat the Causes. *Tolle causam* The Naturopathic physician seeks to identify and remove the underlying causes of illness rather than to merely eliminate or suppress symptoms.

First Do No Harm. *Primum Non Nocere* Naturopathic physicians follow three guidelines to ensure noninvasive treatment of the patient:

- Utilize methods and medicinal substances which minimize the risk of harmful side-effects, using the least force necessary to diagnose and treat;
- Avoid when possible the harmful suppression of symptoms;
- Acknowledge, respect and work with the individual's self-healing process.

Doctor As Teacher. *Docere* Naturopathic physicians educate their patients and encourage self-responsibility for health. They also recognize and employ the therapeutic potential of the doctor/patient relationship.

Treat the Whole Person. Naturopathic physicians treat each patient by taking into account individual, physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, social, spiritual, and other factors that contribute to one's health.

Prevention. Naturopathic physicians emphasize the prevention of disease-assessing factors, heredity, and susceptibility to disease, and work towards making the appropriate decisions in partnership with their patients to prevent illness.

Natural Therapies used in Treatment:

Naturopathic physicians are primary health care physicians clinically trained in a wide variety of medical systems. Some of the natural therapies practiced by Naturopathic physicians are:

Clinical Nutrition. Nutrition and the therapeutic use of foods have always been a cornerstone of Naturopathic medicine. A growing body of scientific knowledge in this area is reflected in numerous professional journals or nutrition and dietary sciences, validating the Naturopathic approach to diet and nutrition. Many medical conditions can be treated as effectively with foods and nutritional supplements as they can be by any other means, but with fewer complications and side effects. Naturopathic physicians receive more than 140 classroom hours in clinical nutrition; most medical doctors receive fewer than 20 hours.

Homeopathic medicine. This powerful system of medicine is more than 200 years old, and is widely accepted in other countries. Homeopathic medicines, when properly prescribed, effect the body's "vital force" and strengthen its innate ability to heal. Homeopathic remedies function on both the physical and emotional levels and seldom have side effects. Some conditions for which conventional medicine has no effective treatment respond well to homeopathy.

Botanical Medicine. Many plant substances are powerful, gentle, effective medicines, with advantages over conventional drugs. They are effective and safe when used properly, in the right dose and in the proper combinations with other herbs and treatments. Botanical medicine can be prepared in many forms – teas, tinctures, capsules – and can be obtained at our clinic dispensary. Naturopathic physicians are trained in both the art and science of botanical medicine.

Physical Medicine. Physical medicine offers treatment for musculoskeletal concerns. Treatments vary and include soft tissue work (including therapeutic massage), spinal manipulation, physiotherapy using heat and cold, gentle electrical impulses, ultrasound, diathermy, hydrotherapy (including colonics), and exercise therapy.

Psychological Counseling. Mental attitudes and emotional states can important elements in healing and disease. Naturopathic physicians are trained in various psychological techniques. Psychological counseling offers support for those exploring the mind/body connection, short term situational counseling, and couples counseling. Student clinicians are supervised by a licensed psychologist.

Thank you for choosing Dr. Diane Lee at the Seattle Naturopathic Center as part of your health care. Please feel free to call us at 206-319-5322 if you have questions or concerns. We are

excited about the future of Naturopathic medicine and appreciate your contribution to its growth and evolution.

Reference: American Association of Naturopathic Physicians.