

Introduction

For seventeen years we have been banging the drum about the wealth of scientifically proven benefits of non-drug medicine, and whilst it is true that there is a great deal more awareness on the subject, the majority of doctors in the medical profession and the general public remain greatly confused. This confusion is hardly surprising when the bulk of the medical profession remain under-educated on the subject of non-drug medicine, seemingly oblivious to the tens of thousands of medical papers published, whilst they continue to use a predominance of drug-based medicine. The press and information providers on the internet, on the other hand, who do their homework, now virtually bombard the public with often conflicting information, which simply results in overwhelming confusion.

Lack of education relating to health is a subject which deserves its own book; there is so much to be told. Repeated surveys we have conducted over the years have demonstrated that over 90 per cent of general practitioners in the United Kingdom, by their own admission, have little or no knowledge about nutritional approaches to health. The average time assigned to this subject being somewhere between two and four hours out of a whole medical training course; and the picture is not a great deal better in Australia or New Zealand. Yet the nutritional state of the human body, male or female, is as fundamentally important to health as good foundations are to a builder. When doctors fail to provide the vital information needed to overcome health problems, we may be forced to resort to long-term medication, or may be left to our own devices, feeling thoroughly frustrated and miserable.

The abundance of published science and seventeen years of clinical application has taught us, without doubt, that we can be the masters of our own health prospects by becoming educated, taking charge of our own menu, and making adjustments to our lifestyle. As well as overcoming common symptoms that detract greatly from our enjoyment of life, without the use of drugs, we now know that we can even help prevent many of the life threatening illnesses such as osteoporosis, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and mental illness, conditions which creep up on us silently as we age.

It sounds incredibly simple, so where have we gone wrong? We have

never had a better opportunity to live a longer, happier or healthier life, but the majority of us are making a hash of it through lack of education. We have taken a wrong turning, bought on by a combination of a lack of education and an overdose of consumer advertising. The easy option is to bury our heads in the sand, hoping that our bodies will thrive no matter how much we abuse and ignore them.

Our real needs

The demands placed on our bodies throughout the many stages of life are great and varied. All too often these demands are not met, resulting in poor health of one form or another. Our bodies are very sensitive 'machines' with very specific requirements for optimum performance. When health trouble is brewing, the body is very good at sending warning messages, but the problem is that the majority of us, through lack of education, fail to interpret the message in time. In fact, most of us know more about home improvement or car maintenance than we do about the needs of our bodies.

We are blissfully unaware that the body requires a constant supply of good nutrients in order to function in an optimum way. Although our brain chemistry, hormone function and immune system will be adversely affected by an inadequate nutrient intake, most of us would not have a clue which foods provide the vital nutrients that may be lacking.

When the important systems in the body, like the brain, nervous system, hormones and immune functions fail to serve us well, we can suffer a wide variety of problems ranging from recurrent infections, fatigue, loss of libido, headaches and other aches and pains, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, anxiety to a whole host of other conditions.

Making poor choices

In addition, our increased prosperity has led us to overindulge in the wrong sort of foods and drinks that often contain chemicals and toxins that would make Mother Nature shudder, and although we now have an incredible choice of fresh food all the year round, more and more people are relying on convenience food. We have reached a point where the traditional kitchen is in danger of becoming obsolete.

Recent reports suggest that children were better nourished when on rations during and shortly after the Second World War, than they are now. With a diet rich in fatty foods, pizzas, burgers, confectionery and fizzy drinks, our children have a battle to be bright and to achieve academically, and as adults we need to have a cast iron constitution in order to escape unscathed.

Our changing habits

Apart from not eating well as individuals, many of us do not sit together as a family to enjoy a good meal, but instead eat 'TV' dinners, skip meals or snack on the hoof.

In the last fifty years we have gone from eating four properly cooked meals per day with approximately one in-between-meal snack each day, to an average of one proper meal each day that is freshly prepared and freshly shopped for, and as many as four snacks. Our bodies were simply not designed to be treated in this way.

Our lifestyle has also changed radically. Most of us no longer have the assistance of the extended family to fall back on, and women often have to be income providers, going out to work as well as caring for a family. For many there never seem to be enough hours in the day. As a result our personal needs are shelved or put on the back burner. We often choose to drive instead of walk, resulting in inadequate exercise. Life in the fast lane with so little time to exercise, often leaves us tired and washed out. Amazingly, in the age of the 'Personal Trainer', with more gyms and health clubs than ever before, over two-thirds of us take insufficient exercise to keep our hearts healthy and our bone mass strong. The result is a greatly reduced quality of life as well as poor health in both the short- and long-term.

To add insult to injury, our food chain has now been heavily tampered with and often contains chemicals and hormones that severely compromise our immune system and challenge our normal body function.

So whilst it is true that we are living longer than ever before, on average until our mid-eighties, unless we ring the changes, we are likely to spend our latter years suffering with either heart disease, cancer, mental illness or osteoporosis, all of which seems to have reached epidemic proportions.

Reclaiming your health

What a tale of potential doom and disaster. However, on a more optimistic note, with a little knowledge it is possible to reclaim your health. We undertook an audit of 100 patients in 1996 who completed our four-month re-education programme. Amongst many other things, we discovered that there was a 92 per cent reduction in generalised aches and pains, 91 per cent decrease in headaches, and an 88 per cent decline in insomnia. Eighty-seven per cent of food cravings had diminished, depression had disappeared in 82 per cent of cases, and 78 per cent of the subjects no longer experienced fatigue. Plus 82 per cent of those who had previously been overweight had overcome their weight problem *without* dieting. In addition, out of the 71 per cent of the sample who had

previously suffered with low libido, 78 per cent had significantly regained their sex drive. Which only goes to show that a little knowledge does put us back in the driving seat.

In the many years of working with patients we have been able to help literally thousands of individuals over their long-term ills, and removed unwanted and unjustified 'labels' that they thought they would have for life. To cite a few examples: We have dealt with a significant number of patients who have been labelled psychologically or even psychiatrically ill, and have left them symptom-free after three or four months. Patients who have had severe migraine for years no longer even have headaches. We have former acne sufferers without spots, and irritable bowel victims who no longer have to pay attention to their digestion. The violent and often suicidal PMS sufferer who described herself as Jekyll and Hyde, feels like her old self again all month. Ongoing problems with thrush and cystitis have abated, and the turbulent symptoms of menopause, and high cholesterol levels or blood pressure, have been replaced in many patients by a new vitality for life.

These are some of the weekly achievements of our work at the Women's Nutritional Advisory Service (WNAS). They are not miracles, just the result of the application of existing medical science. The published medical papers on which we base our recommendations are all to be found in post-graduate medical libraries. They are there for the taking, but very few doctors are familiar with them. You may well consider it a scandal that these papers remain behind closed doors, as their application would very often result in the resolution of most chronic symptoms.

There are many myths about the ageing process. In fact with adequate care and attention along the way, most of us should be able to look forward to a very active and healthy old age with most of our 'bits' intact. However, in current practice this is not always the case. We often hear of women having a hysterectomy prematurely, or having their healthy ovaries removed, or of men having invasive treatment for prostate problems. It is also not unusual to encounter patients who have been on sleeping tablets, or antidepressants, for as long as they can remember, and others who are taking numerous types of medication, many of which are given to counteract the effects of other prescribed drugs.

It would be narrow-minded of us to claim that good nutrition is the only answer to good health. At the WNAS we encourage individuals to re-evaluate their whole lifestyle. Their current complaint is seen as a warning light which starts off the process. Our programmes always incorporate dietary and lifestyle changes, the use of relevant nutritional supplements, an exercise regime and regular relaxation, including visualisation techniques. We often incorporate other complimentary therapies like homeopathy, osteopathy, herbal medicine, massage, acupuncture and self-healing.

Many of our ills are the result of past traumatic emotional experiences which get buried away, either because we can't confront them at the time they occur, or because we are too busy to deal with them. Difficulties with relationships, both in childhood and in adulthood, get locked deep inside, and unless we can somehow come to terms with them rationally, they may damage our health later in life.

However, inadequate nutrient levels often affect brain chemistry, which in turn can affect mental processes. So perhaps trying to solve life's troubles *prior* to getting the body into optimum condition is not a good idea. The majority of our patients have been delighted to discover that problems which had seemed almost insurmountable prior to undertaking our programme, looked more like molehills that were relatively easy to deal with afterwards.

The purpose of this book is to provide you with the education that you have missed out on, and to empower you with the information necessary to make a fully informed decision about your life, your health and your treatment plan. It is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of what your doctor has on offer, as well as to have an overview of what self-help measures are available to you, including the role other complementary therapies can play for specific conditions.

The first part of this book will give you the missing background information and some food for thought. You then have the A–Z of key conditions, followed by suggested dietary and nutritional plans. The scientifically minded will find the medical references for each condition in References on page 495. There is also a recommended reading list and a useful address directory in the Appendices which begin on page 483.

If, after following our recommendations, you would like to share your experiences with us you will find our address on page 511. For those who feel they could use some expert help, we provide a tailor-made service which you can also read about on page 511. Or alternatively you could visit our website, www.wnas@wnas.org.uk

We all have the power to influence not only our own health, but that of our family and future generations. Armed with new knowledge we are confident that you will find that the quality of health you enjoy is for the most part actually in your own hands. In our view we will be many years into the twenty-first century before we can expect the medical profession to provide us with all the answers, and even that assessment may be optimistic. In the meantime, *The Natural Health Bible* will arm you with all the information you need to help yourself, and those near and dear to you, to better health.