

NATURAL HEALTH

WELLNESS



by SHELBY WORTS, ND AND TARA GIGNAC, ND



Naturopathic doctors (NDs) work with the healing power of nature. But what does this mean for you? A person whose body is in balance has the following characteristics:

- sleeps throughout the night and wakes refreshed,
- is pain free,
- is not prone to seasonal allergies,
- transitions well through life's stages (and challenges),
- can regulate his or her own blood pressure and cholesterol levels,
- does not have to rely on a daily regime of prescription medications

NDs seek to provide you with the tools to help your body heal itself by creating the right environment for you to be in balance. With this in mind, here's a glimpse of how NDs may approach a few common ailments, ranging from dealing directly with our often toxic environments, to dealing with sleep and fatigue.

Desire for Detox...

Regardless of whether we are inside or outside, we are bombarded with toxins daily. These range from the very obvious, such as car exhaust, to the obscure, such as material off-gassing. Because of this, it is essential to support our "elimination organs" – those organs in our bodies that are primarily responsible for removing undesirable toxins from our systems.

While it is well-known that the liver is a detoxification organ, it is not the only one. Others include the gallbladder, kidneys, bladder, intestinal tract, lymphatic system and even the skin. A qualified ND can help determine which detox protocol is right for you, since any one of these organs and systems may need extra support to improve your health. NDs provide personalized detox programs, tailored specifically for you. These may include:

- botanical support (herbs),
- nutritional support and dietary modifications
- lymphatic massage,
- colon hydrotherapy,
- specific activity
- education on how to decrease your exposure to daily toxins

Reducing your exposure to environmental toxins – both inside and outside – is essential for your long-term health.

Seasonal Allergies...

Breathing the air around us, using household cleaning products, enjoying that 'new car smell' and consuming pesticides on our foods increase our bodies' toxic load. When this load becomes too great our body cannot tolerate another outside influence, such as pollen, and we become reactive to our environment with symptoms such as sneezing and itchy eyes.

Time and again NDs have seen symptoms dramatically improve after doing an appropriate detoxification protocol. For best results, consult a qualified practitioner well in advance (Eg. 3 months) of your specific allergy season. Recommending a suitable cleanse, evaluating you for food allergies and suggesting a natural antihistamine (such as quercetin) may be involved in your plan.

Skin...

Skin issues, such as eczema, psoriasis, rosacea and acne, are often an external expression of an internal imbalance. Food sensitivities such as dairy or wheat, hormonal imbalance, nutritional deficiencies and toxicity are some of the key factors that an ND will explore when you seek help for your skin. I have seen a 30-year history of eczema clear-up within days of eliminating wheat from the diet!

Weight Loss...

Food allergy testing, colon hydrotherapy, an appropriate physical activity regimen for you, and adrenal assessment are essential. Naturopathic doctors have seen great results with these tools because we learn what your body requires to find its own healthy weight.

Across the country
more and more
Canadians are
seeking
complementary
options each
year for
supporting their
health, both
treatment and
prevention.

“ It is important to understand that 'natural' does not always equate to 'safe' ”

Fatigue / Poor Sleep...

Sleeping well and waking rested are absolutely vital for your overall health. Low energy and unsatisfactory sleep are two of the most common complaints I hear... and I place it as a priority to correct these as soon as possible. Naturopathic treatment for fatigue is not simply natural energy pills; it is finding the cause, which can often be dehydration, low-grade food allergies, malnourishment, hormonal imbalance, physical inactivity or adrenal fatigue, to name a few.

Your adrenal glands are your 'stress' glands that sit on your kidneys. These little glands have a great deal of responsibility in your body as they are responding to stressors in your life (mental, emotional, physical, environmental), producing adrenaline, balancing your sodium-potassium levels and they even produce progesterone and estrogen after menopause. With over 50 different hormones being produced and secreted, these glands can easily become fatigued. A naturopath will assess you for adrenal fatigue if you complain of low energy &/or poor sleep.

Sleep can be effected by low adrenal function, it can also be influenced by the time of day at which you do physical activity, how close to bedtime your last meal is, your caffeine intake in a day, and it can also be influenced by the

blue light that is emitted from your television and computer screens. Evaluating your evening routine can provide a great deal of information for helping you attain a better night's sleep.

Menopause & other hormone issues...

Hormonal issues require assessment of hormone levels, adrenal and thyroid function, toxicity, nutritional intake, symptom profile, emotionality and more. Intravenous (IV) therapy containing magnesium and B vitamins are often very helpful in giving the body a boost of needed nutrition and speedy resolution of symptoms while you make long-term modifications to diet, lifestyle and more. We have even seen hot flashes resolve when a low-grade food allergen was removed from the diet!

So, how does a naturopathic doctor know how to treat you, as a unique individual? Your first visit in a ND's office will be at least 1 hour; you will discuss your main health complaints/goals, you will receive a minor physical exam and will discuss pertinent lab testing that we think may be useful in your case. Testing may include hormones, food allergy, hair minerals, toxic elements, or any number of standard lab tests.

Your ND is able to construct a treatment plan that is personalized for you by gathering objective data, being present during your discussion, allowing you the time to ask your questions and receive answers. At each subsequent visit your program will be modified according to how you are responding to treatment recommendations.

Any product used inappropriately can have the potential to be harmful, and some can interfere with your prescription medications. It is important to understand that 'natural' does not always equate to 'safe'. Prior to commencing a new supplementation protocol be sure to consult a qualified healthcare practitioner who is able to answer your questions. Licensed and registered naturopathic doctors obtain at least 7 years of post-secondary education, 4 of which are intensive training at an accredited naturopathic medical program. ☀

Want to learn more?

May 4th – 8th is Naturopathic Medicine Week across Canada. To find events, seminars and other educational opportunities in your area go to www.CAND.ca

Shelby Worts and Tara Gignac are Licensed and Registered Naturopathic Doctors in Collingwood.
www.shelbyworts.com 705.444.8300
www.taragignac.com 705.444.5331