



Nutritional Medicine at Mountain Air Wellness

1. What is Nutritional Medicine?

Nutritional Medicine is an approach to health care that applies the knowledge that certain micronutrients are essential for our bodies to function optimally, and the lack of these essential nutrients can lead to illness. Nutritional Medicine uses sophisticated laboratory testing procedures to examine biochemical imbalances in the body, which can cause or complicate a specific health problem. Doctors that practice Nutritional Medicine use the test results to design a diet and supplementation program, which will reinstate balance into the body, give the body what it needs to function normally, and help the patient feel better.

2. How is Nutritional Medicine different from what doctors are doing today?

Nutritional Medicine is focused on correcting underlying causes of health problems. In traditional medicine, doctors are trained to diagnose and then use a variety of drugs that can help relieve a particular symptom. This approach usually does not address the cause of the problem but may significantly improve the symptom. A good example here is migraine headaches. The traditional approach would be to treat the symptom with aspirin or other painkiller. A Nutritional Medicine approach is to test for food allergies or a magnesium deficiency since both are common causes of migraine headaches. Another Nutritional Medicine approach is to determine some other possibility, like toxicity, that could be causing the headache.

3. Can Nutritional Medicine be integrated with current medical approaches?

Absolutely. Nutritional Medicine is considered a complementary medicine that is available to enhance the quality of healthcare. Nutritional Medicine offers a natural, non-toxic alternative in dealing with most chronic health problems.

4. When you talk about "Nutritional Medicine," does that just mean changing a person's diet?

Many people believe this. Unfortunately, eating a good diet is not easy to do these days. Research shows that certain nutrients are inadequate in our diets, like Vitamin E, for example. It is difficult to get the quantity of Vitamin E necessary to help prevent diseases like heart disease simply by eating a good diet. Nutritional Medicine involves a good diet, which is fundamental, and specific supplementation based on individual need, which can make all the difference in a person's overall health.

5. What types of illness do you treat with Nutritional Medicine?

Nutritional Medicine is primarily aimed at "chronic illnesses." Conditions like cardiovascular disease, inflammatory bowel diseases, neurological disorders, musculoskeletal disorders (like arthritis and fibromyalgia), autoimmune diseases, and certain types of cancers are all types of "chronic illness." Acute illnesses are more

commonly the domain of traditional medicine. For example, you would not go to a Nutritional Medicine doctor if you were in a car accident and broke your leg. Nutritional Medicine offers a therapy that addresses the root of a condition, not the symptoms, providing the body with the components to heal within and help prevent the onset of disease.

6. Can a physician learn about this new "high tech" approach to medicine in medical school?

At this point in time, medical schools are not teaching core courses in Nutritional Medicine. There is federal grant funding now available through the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM of the National Institutes of Health) to help develop courses in medical schools, as well as Continuing Medical Education programs to help train doctors after they've graduated.

7. What about the safety issues and proper dosages with taking nutrient supplements and herbal products?

One of the benefits of Nutritional Medicine is that you are using compounds that have evolved with the body. Vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and fatty acids are part of what makes up the body. Consequently, they're very low in toxicity. The body is capable of handling them, even in doses much higher than the recommended daily allowance. Herbal products, on the other hand, are outside of the realm of Nutritional Medicine. They are used as an alternative therapy that can produce pharmaceutical effects similar to drugs. They aren't natural to the body. So, there is a difference between herbal medicine and nutritional medicine in terms of potential toxicity.

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