

# WHAT IS NATURAL MEDICINE?

*“First a new theory is attacked as absurd; then it is admitted to be true, but obvious and insignificant; finally it seems to be so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it.”*

—William James

---

## A NEW MEDICINE FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM

MEDICINE:

**1a:** a substance or preparation used in treating disease, **1b:** something that affects well-being; **2a:** the science and art dealing with the maintenance of health and the prevention, alleviation, or cure of disease, **2b:** the branch of medicine concerned with the nonsurgical treatment of disease; **3a:** a substance (as a drug or potion) used to treat something other than disease. —*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*

A number of different terms have been used interchangeably for my preferred term of natural medicine: integrative medicine, holistic medicine, alternative medicine, and complimentary medicine as well as others. Allopathic (conventional or traditional) medicine prefers the term Complimentary/Alternative Medicine or C.A.M. In most instances it is just referred to as alternative medicine. The term alternative implies second choice. In my opinion the natural medicine approach should not be the alternative, or second choice, in most health issues. An ounce of prevention is worth much more than a pound of cure!

A report published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (November 11, 1998) indicated that four out of 10 Americans used “alternative” methods in 1997. The researchers pointed out that the total number of visits to “alternative” medicine practitioners increased almost 50% from 1990, and outnumbered the visits to all medical doctors in the United States. It would appear from these numbers that alternative medicine is not the alternative. If natural medicine is to survive it must become mainstream and emerge from backrooms and from under a shroud of mysticism and New Age therapies.

Imagine a building on fire. It begins when a faulty extension cord starts to smolder from misuse and overuse. Smoke rises, and flames spread. Disease is like the building on fire; the disease process begins long before symptoms can be felt or signs diagnosed by a doctor, just as the fire begins long before the flames are shooting from the building. It is my belief that God created all of us to be vibrantly healthy individuals. Natural medicine is the use of clinical judgment based upon scientific fact to promote the health of an individual rather than treating a disease. The purpose of natural medicine is to change the course of ill health toward promotion of good health.

Natural medicine is not just for the management of short-term symptoms; the underlying premise is for the long-term promotion of health and wellness. The goal is to minimize and eventually remove hindrances or barriers to health such as exposure to toxins, vertebral subluxations, and stress. The goal is further pursued by correcting nutritional deficiencies, improving the intake of good pure water, dealing with

spiritual issues if needed, promoting exercise, and getting adequate sunshine and needed rest. To learn more see our *What Causes Ill-Health?* PDF download.

In my clinic I employ a number of effective, safe and scientifically-endorsed therapies and procedures as part of my health restoration and health maintenance treatment plan. While the list of therapies that could fall under the umbrella

term of natural medicine I use the following: Acupuncture, chiropractic, herbal, homeopathic, naturopathic medicine, and nutritional therapies. Prayer is a powerful healer and is strongly encouraged.

1. **Acupuncture** is a principle of healing rather than a technique. Most Americans think of needles when they think of acupuncture. While needles may be used there are other ways to promote healing based upon the “scientific” principles of acupuncture. In its simplest explanation acupuncture is the balancing of Chi or energy within the body.

*Acupuncture earned “scientific” status from the National Institutes of Health in 1997.*

*What is acupuncture?*

*How does acupuncture work?*

2. **Chiropractic** is the second largest group of primary care providers in the United States after medical doctors. Because doctors of chiropractic are licensed as primary care physicians and have received extensive training in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, they are an excellent healthcare choice. Two thirds of Americans visit a chiropractor as their first choice for the treatment of back pain. Chiropractors are trained to detect and correct malfunctioning and malpositioned vertebra of the spine that may be causing pain or other health problems. Numerous studies have documented the effectiveness of chiropractic for a number of health concerns.

*Chiropractic education qualifies doctors of chiropractic as primary care physicians.*

*What is chiropractic?*

*How does chiropractic work?*

3. **Herbology** is the use of botanicals or plants to promote health and healing. Herb use and application is documented in virtually every culture as well as in the Bible and throughout Ayurveda, German, Native American and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Traditionally these approaches arose because locally grown herbs were the only available source. Although there are differing therapeutic approaches to herbal use, no one is established as superior. Evaluation by a general physician trained in natural health such as myself is well advised.

*Some of the most successful drugs used in medicine have their basis in plants.*

*What is herbology?*

*What are some of the more common uses for herbs?*

4. **Homeopathy** is making a resurgence in America after extensive use at the turn of the last century. At that time, there were twenty-two homeopathic medical schools, one hundred homeopathic hospitals and over one thousand homeopathic pharmacies. It is believed by medical historians that the first clinical trials in medicine were done in homeopathy. It is important that homeopathy be a part of a balanced, total health restoration plan.

*Homeopathy traces its beginning to Hippocrates.*

*What is homeopathy?*

*How does homeopathy work?*

5. **Naturopathic** medicine incorporates a number of healing techniques in the care of patients. Naturopaths promote the prevention of disease through healthy lifestyle and risk factor minimization. It involves the treatment of the whole person - physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. These goals are achieved through cultivation of an attitude of personal responsibility via education in health risks and health promoters. As a licensed primary care physician Dr. Peterson’s training in naturopathic medicine expands the health possibilities for his patients.

*Naturopathic medicine is a distinct health discipline focused on treating the whole person.*

*What is naturopathy?*

*What methods do naturopaths utilize?*

- 6. Nutritional therapy** is the use of phytochemicals, enzymes, vitamins and minerals in the redirection of ones health from disease prevention to health promotion. Dr. Peterson has studied extensively the teachings and writings of such greats in nutrition as Dr. Royal Lee, Dr. Weston Price, Dr. William Albrecht, Dr. Henry Harrower, and Dr. Melvin Page as well as current scientific literature in the formation of his background in nutrition. Disease is frequently the absence of something necessary more so than it is the presence of something negative. Proper nutritional therapy requires an understanding of basic human anatomy, physiology and biochemistry to be effectively applied.

*Nutritional therapy requires an extensive background and understanding of health sciences.*

*What is nutritional therapy?*

*Why should I consider nutritional supplementation?*

As you can see Natural Medicine is a broad topic that requires an educated, scientific background to weed through the beneficial, the useless, and the potentially harmful therapies. All too often one reads a book or hears a radio or television program and wonders whether they should take this or eliminate that. It takes a thorough understanding of the basic sciences to discern when natural medicine is appropriate and when it is not; when it is indicated, and when it is vitally necessary.