



NURTURE YOUR SELF NEWSLETTER

FROM THE OFFICE OF JACKIE YURKO, DOCTOR OF
NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

SPRING 2003

NATUROPATHIC EDUCATION

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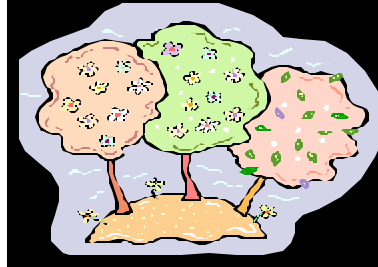
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There is often great confusion surrounding what amount of education is required to practice as a Naturopath. Some people believe it is a two year course and many others think that there is not any specific training required. There are, in fact, a number of different steps a person has to complete to be eligible to practice as a licensed Naturopath.

Currently, the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (located in Toronto) is the only school in Canada that trains licensed Naturopathic Doctors. There are also four schools in the United States: National College of Naturopathic Medicine, Bastyr University, Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine and Health Sciences, and University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine. All of the North American Naturopathic teaching institutions require at least three years of University study prior to entering their programs. There are also a number of prerequisite courses required, including organic and inorganic chemistry and biology. Although it is not necessary, most students entering the programs have an undergraduate degree.

North American Naturopathic programs are all four years in length. The



first and second years of study focus primarily on basic medical sciences, including anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology. This allows students to gain a firm sense of how the body is structured and functions and what different disease processes/health concerns look like. During the first two years, the Naturopathic healing modalities (Nutrition, Botanical Medicine, Homeopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Bodywork) are also introduced. After second year, students are required to write clinic entrance exams. Upon passing each of the five exams, students are able to observe fourth year students working in the school clinic. The third year of study primarily focuses on exploring, in further depth, the different Naturopathic healing modalities. The fourth year is primarily a clinical year in which the students, under the supervision of

licensed Naturopaths, work with clients in the school clinic.

Upon graduation, Naturopaths must write North American standardized licensing exams in order to become licensed practitioners. Upon passing each of the eleven exams, Naturopaths apply for licensing through their provincial organization. In Alberta, the provincial organization is the Alberta Association of Naturopathic Practitioners (AANP).

It is important to become aware of the education required to practice as a licensed Naturopath because currently, in Alberta, Naturopathic Medicine is not fully regulated by the government (government regulation is expected within the year). This means that anyone can practice as a Naturopath, whether or not they have been properly trained. It is important, then, if a person is searching for a Naturopath to work with that they inquire as to the type of training the practitioner has had. Any properly trained Naturopath will be only too happy to relay the amount of education they have had! An additional way to ensure that one is working with a licensed Naturopath is to ask if the person is a member of the AANP (which only accepts fully trained Naturopaths as members).

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MONTHLY NATUROPATHIC INFO SESSIONS AND COOKING DEMOS

The next free info session will be taking place on **Monday, May 19**. The topic will be **'Supporting Healthy Pregnancy'**. The talk will focus on how nutrition, herbal medicine, and homeopathy can all be supportive throughout pregnancy. If you are interested in attending the info session, please call 430 4553 by Friday, May 16 to register. On **Monday, June 16**, there will be a cooking demo. The topic will be **'Summer Fun Foods Cooking Demo'**. The

cooking demo will focus on organic, summery, vegetarian recipes that are both healthy and fun. There will be five dishes prepared (including a smoothie, a salad, a dip/spread, a loaf/patties, and a dessert) during the cooking demo and then everyone will have a chance to sample the delicious results! In order to cover the cost of the food, there will be a **\$4.00** charge to attend the cooking demo (please note increase in cost). If you are interested in attending the cooking

demo, please call by Friday, June 13 to register. All info sessions and cooking demos are held on the third Monday of the month and start at 7:00 PM. They are held at the Parkallen Community Hall (11104 65 Avenue, Edmonton). There will be no info sessions/cooking demos held during the months of July and August. To find out information on other talks that I am presenting, please see the Coming Events section on my website, www.nurture-your-self.com.

NURTURE YOUR BODY

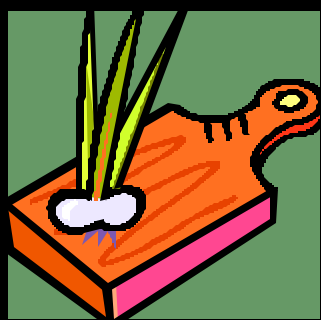
UNDERSTANDING THYROID HEALTH



With thyroid conditions, the mind-body connection is not just part of the disorder; it is part of the treatment as well. The thyroid is the annex to the brain—the gland with which and through which the brain communicates. For this reason, it is very responsive to techniques that work on the body through the mind.

Ridha Arem

The Thyroid Solution



Our thyroid gland is located above the base of our throat. Although it is small in size, our thyroid affects many of our body systems and, as a result, has a huge impact on our overall health. If our thyroid is functioning at a suboptimal level (also known as hypothyroidism), we can develop a variety of health concerns. Unfortunately, it is believed that up to fifty percent of all people living with a low functioning thyroid gland are undiagnosed. It is important, then, to be aware of the concerns that can develop with low thyroid function and to gain a sense of our own level of thyroid health.

The primary health concern that develops with a low functioning thyroid is **fatigue**. Our thyroid is responsible for regulating our metabolic rate and when our thyroid slows down, so does our metabolic rate. This can create feelings of sluggishness. An overwhelming feeling of tiredness and an increased need for sleep can also develop.

Additional symptoms of suboptimal thyroid function are **emotional fluctuations (depression, anxiety) and mental concerns (memory deficits, difficulty concentrating)**. The hormones produced by our thyroid gland, T4 and T3, are responsible for maintaining balanced levels of brain neurotransmitters such as serotonin, noradrenalin, and gaba. Each of these neurotransmitters are intricately connected to our emotional and mental health. With hypothyroidism, our levels of T4 and T3 decrease, resulting in lowered levels of serotonin, noradrenalin, and gaba. Lowered levels of serotonin and noradrenalin are linked to depression. Lowered levels of gaba are linked to anxiety. With decreased levels of serotonin, noradrenalin, and gaba, we can also develop a sense of 'brain fog' - difficulty remembering words, names, and

events. Our ability to concentrate can also be impacted.

In addition to being linked with fatigue, the slower metabolism found with hypothyroidism can also lead to **weight gain**. As our metabolic rate slows down, we burn calories less efficiently and, as a result, we can see an increase in our weight. Also affecting weight gain is the decreased levels of serotonin found with hypothyroidism. Balanced levels of serotonin are responsible for triggering a sensation of fullness/satiety when eating and also help to decrease cravings for fats and simple sugars. When our serotonin levels are lowered, these signals are less effective and can further contribute to weight gain.

With hypothyroidism, **imbalances in our reproductive hormones** can also occur. Lowered levels of T4 and T3 can lead to decreased or imbalanced levels of estrogen and progesterone. This can create or exacerbate premenstrual concerns such as breast tenderness, water retention, fatigue, and emotional fluctuations. It can also result in longer cycles and heavier menstrual flow. The development of hypothyroidism also often coincides with perimenopause/menopause and can make this transition much more unsettled. The imbalanced levels of estrogen and progesterone found in hypothyroidism can affect ovulation and may be linked with decreased female fertility. In addition to affecting estrogen and progesterone levels in women, hypothyroidism can also affect testosterone levels in men. For both women and men this can result in decreased libido.

Additional symptoms of hypothyroidism include **joint pain, muscle cramping, constipation, dry skin/hair, hair loss, and a constant sensation of feeling cold**.

An effective way of determining our

own level of thyroid health is to measure our basal body temperature (our body's resting temperature). Because our thyroid is responsible for regulating our body temperature, our temperature is an accurate reflection of our thyroid function. To determine our body's resting temperature, we need to take the measurement directly in the morning, prior to getting out of bed, and we need to place the thermometer in the center of our armpit. By recording our temperature each morning for four weeks, we can get a sense of how our thyroid is functioning. If our temperature is routinely lower than 36.6 degrees Celsius, it is likely that our thyroid is functioning at a suboptimal level.

There are numerous nutrients that support thyroid function. Iodine, the primary nutrient required by the thyroid, is most prevalent in sea salt and sea vegetables, such as dulse, nori, and kelp. Seasoning our food with sea salt or integrating sea vegetables into our diets (in rice/bean cooking water, soups, stews, salads) can increase our intake of iodine. Antioxidant minerals and vitamins, such as Selenium, Zinc, and Vitamins E, A, and C, enhance our thyroid's ability to produce T4 and T3. Whole grains and nuts and seeds are rich in Selenium, Zinc and Vitamin E. Fresh fruits (oranges, strawberries) and vegetables (leafy greens, peppers) are rich in Vitamins A and C. Integrating these foods into our diets on a daily basis is another important step we can take in supporting our thyroid health.

By understanding how our thyroid function affects the way we feel, we can gain new insights into our health concerns. By recognizing thyroid imbalance and integrating necessary support, we can have a huge impact on our overall level of health.

YUMMY THYROID SUPPORTING SAUCE

This sauce contains flax oil and dulse, both of which are supportive of thyroid health. This sauce can be placed over grains, vegetables, salads.

Ingredients: 1/3 cup flax oil, 1/3 cup tahini, 1/4 cup lemon juice, freshly squeezed, 1 cup water, 3 tbsp miso, 1

tbsp unrefined sweetener (maple syrup, brown rice syrup etc.), 1/4 tsp dulse flakes, 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper, 3 garlic cloves, minced, 1/2 tsp fresh ginger, grated.

Directions: Place garlic, ginger, tahini, lemon juice, miso, sweetener,

dulse, and cayenne into a blender and blend for 1 minute. Combine flax oil and water in a measuring cup and slowly drizzle into blender. Blend for an additional 1—2 minutes. Yields 2 cups and can be stored, in refrigerator, for 3—5 days. Enjoy!

NURTURE YOUR MIND

THE IMPORTANCE OF MINDFULNESS

Many of us spend a great deal of our time thinking either of the future or of the past. As a result, we are rarely grounded in the present. By constantly dwelling on the past or planning for the future, we prevent our selves from being actively engaged in our present lives. Because of this, we may miss out on gaining the most knowledge and the most joy from each moment we live. This can have a huge impact on our overall health by creating imbalances on a physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual level. The key to moving towards living in the present is to practice mindfulness—the art of remaining focused as each step of our lives unfold. The importance of mindfulness is well established in the book, Peace is Every Step, by Thich Nhat Hanh. Throughout the book, Hanh reveals how mindful living can improve our health, our lives, and ultimately the world around us.

For Hanh, the gateway to mindful living is our breath. Our breath can be an excellent grounding force, helping to shift our focus back to our immediate lives. As we begin to focus on the rise and fall of our breath, we are automatically brought into the present. Conscious breathing does not have to be complex; instead, it can be as simple as stopping, several times throughout our day, and matching our breath with thoughts such as breathing in, breathing out. Hanh suggests this mantra: 'Breathing in, I calm my body. Breathing out, I smile. Dwelling in the present moment, I know this is a wonderful moment' (10). As we integrate conscious breathing breaks into our daily routine, it is my sense that we will develop the ability to be aware of our breath beyond these specific peri-

ods. This will then allow us to live mindfully more often with increasing ease.

As we begin to consciously breathe and live mindfully, we inevitably begin to slow down. Slowing down the pace of our lives can create numerous benefits. As we slow down and are taken out of the cycle of being constantly occupied or feeling rushed, our awareness can shift toward our selves. Taking time to focus on our selves in the present moment can allow us to gain insight into many different areas of our lives. Hanh states that when we slow down 'we begin to see and, if we can see, we understand' (39). Common patterns, that can be difficult to recognize if we are constantly focused on our past or our future, can become more obvious. Beliefs or ideas that are important to us currently can become more clearly established. With these insights, we can begin to make choices that affect and change the direction of our daily lives.

Slowing down and living mindfully also allows us to be aware of our emotions when we experience them. For many of us, our health and our lives are impacted by emotions that we have repressed/stored in our bodies. Hanh believes that unprocessed harmful emotions lead to the creation of 'internal formations' or knots which can 'manifest as destructive images, feelings, thoughts, words or behavior' (64-65). From a Naturopathic perspective, repressed emotions such as anger, sadness, worry can lead to numerous health concerns including skin rashes, emotional fluctuations, asthma, digestive disturbances. When we are aware of our emotions as we experience them, we can work towards transforming or expressing our

emotions and preventing them from forming knots. As we carry around fewer knots, the burden on our bodies decreases and our overall health will improve.

Slowing down and living with awareness can also bring us more in tune with our self healing mechanisms. Within Naturopathic Medicine, our own internal self healing mechanisms are central to creating long lasting improvements in our health. As we continually strengthen our self healing mechanisms, we have a stronger basis on which to build and strengthen our level of health.

Living mindfully can also greatly enrich our overall experience of life. If we are focused only on the past or on the future, it is not unusual to reflect back at the end of our day and feel as though we have not gained any joy or knowledge from our activities. It can feel as though our lives are empty. When we are aware of the present, on the other hand, each moment has the potential to be full of meaning. We are able to learn from and find beauty in all of our experiences. This can lead to daily growth and our lives can become infused with joy and happiness. As we begin to experience the many emotional and physical benefits of living mindfully, we may also find that we develop a stronger sense of inner peace. This sense of peace will spread out into our daily lives, affecting our interactions with others. As we share our groundedness with those around us, they too will feel more calm and then be able to transmit such feelings to others they meet. At the most basic level, then, living mindfully can contribute to the ongoing process of working toward a more peaceful and stable world.



Every breath we
take, every step
we make, can be
filled with peace,
joy, and serenity.
We need only to
be awake, alive in
the present
moment.

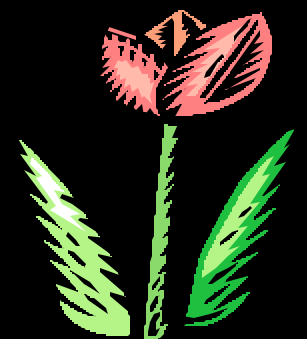
Thich Nhat Hanh
Peace is Every
Step

REMOVING THE BARRIERS TO MINDFULNESS

As was mentioned in the above article, the key to beginning to integrate mindfulness into our lives is by working with our breath several times each day. However, even with the intention to focus on our breath, many of us go through our whole day without doing so. In his book, Peace is Every Step, Hanh offers many beautifully simple suggestions to more easily introduce

awareness into our daily routine. Common sounds can be used as excellent reminders to bring our selves back to the present. The beeping of watches every hour, the ringing of bells at the end of each class, the growling of hungry stomachs can all serve as signals to focus on the present. We can also utilize common daily activities as reminders. Each time

we are stopped at a red light, we can return to the present. As we walk, each time our feet take the next steps, we can ground our selves. Each time we sit down to eat, we can focus our awareness on the present. If we take the time to examine our lives, it becomes apparent that we are presented with numerous gifts each day that encourage us to live mindfully.





NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT

THE SEVENTH CHAKRA

The foundation of happiness is mindfulness.

The basic condition for being happy is our consciousness of being happy.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Peace is Every Step

Chakras are energetic centers through which energy is both transmitted and received. There are seven major chakras associated with our bodies. Each individual chakra is associated with specific areas of our bodies and is linked to different aspects of our physical and emotional health.

Our seventh chakra is located at the top, or crown, of our head and is associated with the color violet. The beauty and power of our seventh chakra is revealed by its Sanskrit name, sahasrara, which means thousand petaled lotus. The energetics of our seventh chakra are very intricate and layered, having strong connections to our deepest selves. Our seventh chakra also holds many treasures. Caroline Myss states that our seventh chakra is believed to be the entry point of our life force, a conduit for 'an invisible current of energy that endlessly pours into the human energy system, nourishing every part of the body, the mind, and the spirit' (116). The power of our seventh chakra allows us to discover and trust in our greater purpose, our reason for living. Our seventh chakra is the seat of our connection

with our spirituality. Our seventh chakra is also involved in discovering and forming our beliefs, attitudes, values, and conscience and then transforming these ideas into the foundation of our lives.

Our seventh chakra is imbalanced if we are leading a life that holds no meaning for our selves. If we are not spiritually connected, our seventh chakra suffers. It is also harmed if we do not nurture our ability to trust in the natural unfolding process of our lives. Our seventh chakra is compromised if we fear self growth and development. It is also affected if we do not believe in our abilities and talents. Our seventh chakra is undernourished if we are consumed by negativity. It is also impacted if we repeatedly act in ways that do not take into account others' feelings, lives, health. Our seventh chakra is not nurtured when we are unable to recognize a greater purpose to our lives.

If our seventh chakra is closed, our overall life force decreases and all aspects of our health can be undernourished. Our seventh chakra is specifically associated with our central nervous system (brain and spinal

cord) and our musculoskeletal system (muscles and bones), but can affect all our body systems. Health concerns that can be reflective of an imbalanced seventh chakra include Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrigs Disease), paralysis, osteoporosis, bone cancer, and any life threatening or changing health concern. From the perspective of our seventh chakra health, a life changing health concern can serve as a wake up call, encouraging us to connect with our internal wisdom and discover a deeper certainty of our path in life. Whether or not we have health concerns that are reflective of seventh chakra imbalance, we can all benefit from seventh chakra support as it strengthens our overall health and purpose in life.

To build our seventh chakra health, we can work toward the opening of our chakra. We can draw our energy to our seventh chakra, infusing it with violet light and focusing on opening and clearing. Over the next while, I encourage us all to spend time bringing intent and strengthening to our seventh chakra

25%

OFF NEXT FOLLOW-UP VISIT



EXPIRES JULY 31, 2003

ALL INFORMATION IN THIS NEWSLETTER IS INTENDED FOR GENERAL INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THESE TOPICS, PLEASE DROP BY THE MONTHLY INFORMATION SESSIONS.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER.

RESOURCES USED IN DEVELOPING THIS NEWSLETTER

PEACE IS EVERY STEP HANH

WOMEN'S BODIES, WOMEN'S WISDOM NORTHRUP

THE CREATION OF HEALTH MYSS & SHEALY

THE THYROID SOLUTION AREM

RECOMMENDED INFORMATIVE WEBSITES

www.mothing.com

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www.nurture-your-self.com UPDATE

ALL PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE NURTURE YOUR SELF NEWSLETTERS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE AT www.nurture-your-self.com. IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO READ THE NEXT NEWSLETTER (SUMMER 2003) ONLINE, PLEASE CALL (780 430 4553) OR EMAIL (jjurko@telusplanet.net) AND I WILL EMAIL YOU WHEN THE NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN POSTED ON THE WEBSITE.