

## Why Do We Get Sick???

Often when a person is diagnosed with a major chronic health problem, that person asks or at least wonders, "How could this happen to me? It came so suddenly."

The fact of the matter is, it did not come suddenly. The disease process started long before it was diagnosed. It can start as long as ten or twenty years before you know you have the disease. Usually the disease process starts when a sufficient amount of factors come together to start you down the road to having a diagnosable disease. These factors can be any number and combination of things. It could be too many refined foods, excess amounts of saturated fats and fried foods and protein, not getting enough vitamins and minerals, accumulation of toxins, not enough exercise, not enough rest, exposure to pollutants and chemicals, a weakened immune system, a high stress life, genetic predisposition to the disease, chronic bacterial or viral infection, and other factors. Not any ONE of these things are THE reason for the sickness; it is the combined factors.

These combined factors merely set you on the road toward disease. Once you are on that road, it still does not guarantee that you will end up being diagnosed with the disease. You are kept going down the road by the initial factors being reinforced or continued, and perhaps by other factors being added. If the disease process continues uninterrupted, eventually it will come to a point where you will be officially diagnosed with a disease. However, at any point along that road you can halt the process and usually even reverse it by addressing the factors, the incorrect diet and lifestyle habits, that initiated it and/or reinforced it.

From a natural medicine perspective, when the disease process started, you had fallen from optimum health. Once a person has less than optimum health, the natural medicine approach dictates that it should and needs to be addressed, even though the person has not yet been diagnosed with a disease and a medical doctor has pronounced him or her free of illness. The goal of natural medicine is to build and maintain optimum health, which automatically means disease and sickness are not present. Conventional medicine will not even recognize that a problem exists until the disease process is way down the road and clinical symptoms are being manifested that can be readily observed or tested in the lab.

Most people have at least heard of the RDAs (Recommended Dietary Allowance) set by the government, which are currently being reviewed and changed. RDAs are generally considered the guidelines for good health. However, RDAs have been set from the standpoint of preventing deficiency diseases (such as survey, rickets, etc.), as opposed to optimum health. Therefore, you can be getting the RDAs of the various nutrients, but not be in optimum or even good health, but merely free of diagnosable disease. Many health problems with undetermined causes can be traced to vitamin and mineral insufficiencies, or not getting

enough of certain nutrients to truly be healthy. Many in the natural medicine perspective believe that the nutrient requirements for optimum health are significantly higher than the RDAs. Therefore, one of the things that natural medicine considers is sub-clinical nutrient deficiencies (undiagnosable insufficiencies).

Natural medicine looks at other vital factors that conventional nutrition generally has not considered very important. These factors include antioxidants, enzymes, probiotics (providing sufficient friendly bacteria), dietary fiber, and plant pigments (carotenes, chlorophyll, flavonoids, and other vitamin-like compounds and dietary constituents).

Antioxidants are extremely important in protecting us from the damage inflicted by a certain kind of erratic oxygen molecule that we are exposed to everyday. Excess calories, pollution, and chemicals increase our exposure. This dangerous kind of oxygen molecule damages cell walls, DNA, and causes fatty acids to rancify (such as found in the brain). This damage affects the functioning of various aspects of our bodies and has been associated with aging, arteriosclerosis, arthritis, cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis (MS), senile dementia, and just about every other chronic degenerative problem. Antioxidants work to neutralize this harmful substance and protect us from its cumulative effects. Antioxidants often used include vitamins A, C, E, selenium, zinc, magnesium, beta-carotene, flavonoids, and some of the B vitamins. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that we daily take in a sufficient supply of antioxidants, and avoid unnecessary calories, pollutants, and chemicals.

Natural medicine deals with other broader issues than those normally addressed from a conventional nutrition perspective. It also shows that our mental state as we eat has a significant impact on the amount of nourishment we receive from our food. Eating should be in a relaxed and peaceful setting, without hurry, tension, arguing, undue stress and excitement. We should be able to eat slowly and chew our food thoroughly, being conscious of what we are doing, including the taste of the food. Meals need to be approached with appreciation, including blessing the food in prayer, which prepares the body to receive this new nourishment. Natural medicine seeks to also ensure thorough and efficient digestion, which is imperative for good health. This is accomplished through eating correctly and the right kind of foods.

To answer the question, "Why do we get sick?", we must personally look at what we do, our daily habits, and make sure that we do not allow factors to come together to push us down the road to being diagnosed with a major chronic health problem.

The natural medicine perspective can enrich anyone's life and health. It has many benefits, and has helped many people achieve a richer quality of life with better health. See what it can do for you!

