



*"Primum non nocere"*



Number 9

## THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

**O**ur medical system is in crisis. The recent conversion of medical insurance to managed care has hospitals, doctors, and patients scrambling to try to understand how this ever-changing compensation system operates. The massive confusion works to the advantage of the insurance companies whose aim is to hold onto monies for as long as possible before paying claims, thus extending their capital investments in financial markets. The longer they hold onto your money, the more dividends they can earn. The medical crisis is not limited to the financial side however. There is a crisis of trust and belief in the philosophy of modern allopathic medicine as more consumers look to alternative medicine for answers. There is mounting interest in herbs, homeopathy, chiropractic, massage, naturopathy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, kinesiology, and reflexology.

The problem with allopathic medicine is that most treatments are symptomatic remedies and do not treat the underlying cause of the disease. For example, aspirin will stop a headache but does not treat the cause of the headache. Antibiotics and vaccines prevent infections but don't address the issue of how to boost one's natural immunity. Surgery may remove a cancerous tumor or open a blocked artery, but doesn't address the metabolic abnormality that generated these problems. Modern allopathic medicine is very good at handling acute crisis conditions such as trauma, but is not as good at treating chronic illnesses or guiding people to good health.

When modern medicine has attempted to address wellness issues, it has developed misguided programs such as multi-vaccine drives, annual mammogram screening, oral contraceptive pills, post-menopausal hormone replacement therapy, or the USDA food pyramid. These programs have generated more damages than benefits. Vaccination programs have resulted in children harmed by vaccines in known and perhaps yet unknown ways. The average child entering Kindergarten has received thirty-six doses of eleven different vaccines! The assumption that no immediate adverse reaction means a vaccine is entirely safe, is a false assumption. Witness the statistical connection between the use of the MMR vaccine and the epidemic rise of infantile autism in the U.S. and the U.K. Here is an example where it took twenty years to discover that a vaccine or certain combinations of vaccines may cause damage in an unanticipated manner. Synthetic sex hormones for birth control or menopausal symptoms have resulted in epidemics of breast cancer and infertility. The USDA food pyramid based diet, high in carbohydrates, has led to an epidemic of type 2 diabetes, obesity, and heart disease which threatens to bankrupt the medical care budget, not to mention the decrease in the quality of life for those affected.

We have a situation where the failures of allopathic medicine's attempt to manipulate health have resulted in the perpetuation of new diseases to treat: infertility, attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, autism, obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, autoimmune disorders, cancer, etc. It is no wonder that patients are becoming cynical and skeptical at the attempts of modern medicine to manipulate health care. We are spending more and more on medical care without gaining a wellness benefit. Politicians who are promising a Medicare prescription drug entitlement are sending the wrong message to senior citizens. The message that there is a pill available that can handle any problem is a false promise. In fact, aren't we trying to send the opposite message to teenagers, to "say no to drugs; drugs are not the answer to coping with life's problems?"

I believe that medicine in the twenty-first century will consist of three components: drugs and medicines, interventions, and self-care. The development of new drugs is limited due to the high costs and the plethora of adverse side effects that accompany all drugs. There is room to create new interventions, for example tissue and gene transplants, but these procedures are extremely costly and raise ethical considerations. It is the area of self-care that I believe will blossom and flourish in the twenty-first century. Dissatisfied with the limitations of drugs, interventions, and over-burdened

practitioners, individuals will seek out information about their own personal interest or weakness in order to achieve self-improvement. The Internet has opened to public scrutiny this information once reserved only for medical professionals. I believe that in the pursuit of wellness the major areas of new developments will occur in nutrition, exercise, brain research, meditation, and spirituality. \*

## FISH OIL

**T**he fat from cold water dwelling fish contains two long-chain omega 3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA, which are essential for good health. These fatty acids do not exist in vegetable oils such as flax seed oil. EPA stimulates the synthesis of "good" eicosanoids, which are powerful hormones that mediate body functions at the cellular level. Prostaglandin E1 is one of the eicosanoids whose synthesis is stimulated by EPA. The following table enumerates the multiple effects of prostaglandin E1:

<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>EFFECT</u>
Circulatory.....	Decreases platelet aggregation.
Respiratory.....	Dilates bronchial smooth muscle.
Nervous.....	Controls uptake and release of neurotransmitters; anti-depressive.
Immune.....	Anti-inflammatory; anti-viral.
Endocrine.....	Enhances the release of thyroxin, melatonin, DHEA, HGH, estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone; decreases insulin release.
Digestive.....	Decreases acid secretion.
Reproductive...	Improves blood flow to the genitalia; promotes fertility; strengthens labor contractions.
Skin.....	Stimulates synthesis of keratin for skin, hair, & nails.

DHA is an important component of neuron cell membranes. DHA comprises 50% of the fatty acids in a newborn's brain. Breast milk is rich in DHA, however American women have among the lowest breast milk levels of this important fatty acid in the world. Undoubtedly this is due to the low consumption of fish in the diet. American infant formulas do not contain DHA and this may explain the lower IQ scores among children raised on formula compared to those who are breast-fed. There is wisdom in the old adage that fish is "brain food."

I am recommending that everyone take fish oil as a dietary supplement. This is especially important for pregnant and lactating women who wish to offer their babies the best possible start in life. You must realize that elevated insulin levels, caused by a diet too

rich in carbohydrates can negate the positive effects of EPA. Refer to my previous newsletters about the Zone nutrition method for further information about controlling insulin and eicosanoids. The fish oil you choose should be molecularly distilled which insures that heavy metals, PCB's, and other contaminants have been removed. If fish oil has been molecularly distilled, the label will read "cholesterol free". The better fish oil products also contain a small amount of natural vitamin E as an anti-oxidant preservative. Fish oil is available in capsules to swallow to avoid the objectionable taste.

In the near future a high-tech pharmaceutical grade of purified fish oil will become available. This product will contain only DHA and EPA without the associated saturated fats that exist in health food grade fish oils. This product will allow a patient to take therapeutic levels of EPA and DHA in a much smaller volume of oil without any fishy taste or gastrointestinal upset. Higher dosing will enable treatment for conditions such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, autoimmune and inflammatory disorders, type 2 diabetes, asthma, allergies, attention deficit disorder, heart disease, and even cancer. These conditions result from a long-term imbalance of eicosanoids. Contact our office if you are interested in obtaining high quality health food grade fish oils now, or the pharmaceutical grade of purified fish oils once they become available. \*

## EPIDURALS FOR CHILDBIRTH

**T**he question arises, why attempt natural childbirth in an age when epidural blocks are being promoted so heavily? The answer lies in how a person perceives life in general.

Childbirth is an ancient physiologic and anatomic event that has not changed much in the past two million years, and is unlikely to change tomorrow. Birth is the culmination of a miraculous journey that begins with the union of two barely visible cells and 266 days later results in the emergence of a new human life and spirit onto the earth. There is no question that there is discomfort for the woman giving birth, but there is solace in making this mysterious ancient journey that billions of other women have made during the past Millennia. How presumptuous of modern man to think that he can manage, alter, and conquer this perfect process without paying a steep price!

There are two ways to experience a magnificent wonder such as the Grand Canyon. One person could fly over the Canyon and peer down from the window of the airplane and perhaps take a few pictures. The other person would hike down into the Canyon or view it from a raft on the Colorado River. The person who chooses the more challenging path will have an arduous, but more intimate and intense experience. This experience will not only more clearly reveal the magnificence of nature, but the person will also learn about himself - about his inner strengths and weaknesses, and about his character under duress. Women who elect natural childbirth without medical interventions develop a sense of empowerment. If they can achieve this most difficult of human challenges drawing from their own inner strength, they can meet lesser challenges in life with equal determination and vigor. Women who once felt dependent or weak, after experiencing natural childbirth feel powerful, strong, and in control. This is a necessary step in the maturation process of a woman's character, which allows her to assume the role of mother and matriarch of her family, wielding a positive sense of control and determination. This empowerment is essential to the successful development of a strong family unit.

Women who choose to fly over their labor with an epidural and peer down upon their birth process without sensation, may fail to achieve this sense of accomplishment and empowerment. They come to believe that without the medical interventions they could not possibly be competent to birth their own baby. This initiates a lasting pattern of dependency that will surely extend to other areas in their lives when they are exposed to difficult challenges.

Finally there are potential medical complications when using epidural blocks for childbirth. Epidurals confine a woman to bed for the duration of her labor. An intravenous fluid line is required as well as constant electronic fetal monitoring. A catheter is placed into the

urethra and bladder because the paralyzed woman is unable to urinate on her own. Contractions often slow down and then she requires intravenous pitocin to augment her labor. Pitocin can cause contractions to become too strong, which may injure the mother or the baby. Epidurals often lower blood pressure in the mother and thus decrease oxygenated blood flow to the placenta, resulting in distress patterns on the fetal monitor. At this point an emergency Cesarean section may be performed. An epidural rarely can extend too high and paralyze the diaphragm muscle causing the mother to be unable to breathe, resulting in a lack of oxygen and brain damage to the mother and baby. If the epidural extends too low, the legs are paralyzed, there is no urge to push, and the expulsive efforts in second stage labor are ineffective. At this point a forceps delivery, vacuum extraction, or Cesarean section may be required to get the baby out. An epidural can cause a fever that is difficult to distinguish from the fever caused by an infection, and thus result in the unnecessary administration of antibiotics to the mother and baby. The narcotic in the epidural drip can pass to the fetus during labor, and suppress the breathing and sucking reflexes in the newborn. Narcosis can result in a baby that requires resuscitative efforts in order to initiate breathing, and later, a poor breast-feeding start. An epidural may give incomplete relief, resulting in a one-sided window of pain that is even harder to tolerate than an unmedicated labor. These are all examples where the effect of one intervention during childbirth results in the need for additional interventions.

Some women experience long term side effects from their epidural after the birth. Headaches, back pain, or tingling and numbness in the legs can become chronic problems long after the delivery is over. Admittedly these complications are uncommon, but if this happens to you, it is *you* who has to suffer with long-term discomfort or misery for a questionable benefit.

What can a woman do to avoid an epidural? She must train herself mentally and physically for the difficult challenge of childbirth, just as an athlete trains for an athletic event. She needs to eat well to assure optimal nutrition for herself and her baby. She must exercise to attain strength, flexibility, and endurance. She should attend childbirth classes and read books about comfort measures and relaxation techniques for coping with labor. She needs to create a positive mental attitude, to recognize that her ancestors have given birth without drugs for many thousands of years in the past, and that she too possesses the inner strength to attain a natural birth. She should surround herself with a supportive team during her labor that is committed to giving her positive encouragement and advice.

As with any medical intervention, there are a few women for whom an epidural is a beneficial intervention, allowing her to relax so that she can dilate and give birth vaginally, not by a Cesarean section. However this percentage should be more like 5% rather than the current 80% of women who are choosing epidurals due to fear and to the lack of proper preparation, education, and support. \*

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