

**THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
AND  
REGISTER OF NATUROPATHS**



**Naturopathic Healthcare:  
Help Yourself to Better Health**

# Naturopathic Healthcare:

## Help Yourself to Better Health

*“The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in proper diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.”*

*Thomas A. Edison*

You may be one of many people who have health problems and don't know where to go for help. Problems such as pain, tiredness, hormonal imbalance including menstrual difficulties, skin complaints and bowel problems are common. You may not wish to take drugs, and would like to try natural methods, but don't know where to start. You may be well and would like to know how to stay well or even improve your health or would like to know where to find information on how to live a healthy lifestyle.

This is a guide to Natural Health Care or Naturopathy. It is designed to give you a better understanding of how you can help yourself to better health.

## Only Nature Heals

### ***Each of us has the ability to heal ourselves***

We all know that if we cut our finger the body instantly starts to get to work on the damage and within a few days healing has taken place. We take this for granted. But actually this is amazing, and the same process goes on inside the body. Throughout our whole lives this innate healing or self-correcting ability is striving to put things right. Why then do we get illness or disease? If we neglect to look after the needs of our body its ability to heal itself is impaired. Just as we need to look after our cars so that they don't break down, the same is true for us. But how many of us take as much care about which fuel we put in ourselves as we do about which fuel we put in our cars!

### ***What happens when something goes wrong?***

Many of us suffer from complaints that are not regarded as serious but have a big impact on our lives. We may have skin rashes, or bowel complaints, women may get PMS, men may be bothered by increased difficulty passing urine due to benign prostate enlargement or we may feel tired a lot of the time – but isn't this normal, doesn't everyone? The answer is no. The human body is designed to work efficiently without these minor ailments.

Actually these ailments are trying to tell you something, trying to tell you that something is out of balance.

### ***How do you discover what the problem is?***

There are only three places to look:

- Your body chemistry
- Your body structure
- Your mental or emotional self

What you eat and how you eat affects your body's makeup or chemistry. You may have heard the saying "you are what you eat". And this is very true. A builder goes to a builders' merchant for the raw materials to build a house; our bodies rely on you putting the right raw materials in at the top end in order to build a healthy body! Not only what we eat but how we eat is important. For example, if we eat when we are angry or stressed the food goes through our systems much more quickly, not giving us much time to absorb all the nutrients.

Our bodies struggle to function properly if we become out of balance structurally. For example, if we don't use our upper backs and chest properly because we are slumped over a desk most of the day we can develop lung problems such as asthma.

Our thoughts and emotions also affect our health. For example, if we get uptight about an exam or a job interview we may feel our abdomen go into a knot, this tightness will affect how well we are able to digest our food. We may get diarrhoea. If you are constantly under stress you may be prone to diarrhoea or loose bowel motions more of the time.

These three areas, body chemistry, structure and emotions are not separate. As you can see from the above examples they all affect each other. The amazing part is that when you bring these areas back into balance the symptoms simply disappear. Symptoms are only an outward expression of an inner imbalance.

### ***Back To Basics***

The human body has taken millions of years to evolve to what it is today. But changes occur extremely slowly so that what the body needed millions of years ago is still basically what it needs today. It has come to expect certain foods for its fuel, a certain amount of sunlight and fresh air, and a certain amount of exercise and relaxation. We are healthiest when we are living as close to these expectations as possible. Sometimes our modern life means that it is not possible to live as our bodies would like and we need extra help to support our lifestyle. However, there is no substitute for getting the basic things right.

### ***Optimal Nutrition.***

Just like a high-performance car, we function at our best when we put the right fuel in our 'engine'. During the time we were evolving there was only one fuel available; the natural kind. Our early ancestors ate what was around them. Of course these foods didn't have any pesticides or other chemicals sprayed on them. Modern foods sprayed with synthetic chemicals seem totally foreign to the body. We can get close to eating the correct "fuel" by eating the types of foods our ancestors did. This would be organically produced fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains. Fish from clean waters and organically reared meat. Food that has been processed and contains many artificial chemicals such as colour and flavour should be avoided.

You may feel that this all sounds too simple!

We have good news. Good health is, for the majority of people, quite simply achieved. Your Naturopath can help you work out whether there are any problems with your diet and physical structure, and will help you find any emotional blocks to your gaining better health.

Naturopaths have been helping people to better health for over 100 years.

# Things you should know about your body.

## ***Symptoms are our friends***

Symptoms are signposts; they are trying to tell us that something is wrong. Symptoms of acute illness are particularly important, for example, fever, sweating, mucus, swelling, diarrhoea and coughing. These are the result of your bodies healing efforts to try and correct whatever is wrong. For example, if you have an infection your body may produce a high temperature. This is a good thing; it helps to kill the infection and speeds up the ability of the body to deal with the foreign invaders.

When we take medicines and 'remedies' that bring down this fever, our bodies are much less able to deal with the infection. So it may last much longer than it should do. Continually suppressing the bodies healing mechanism leads eventually to other problems such as skin complaints or chest problems. So it is important to understand the body has a healing mechanism and what the symptoms are trying to tell us.

## ***Everybody is different.***

You may have heard the expression "one man's food is another man's poison". This is true. Whilst there is a basic diet which all humans ideally need as fuel. Individuals may require slight changes to this basic guideline. For example, some people may aggravate an inflammatory problem by eating certain foods. Our genes are unique to us. This may mean that we are more likely to develop certain problems. Whatever your parents and grandparents suffered from is more likely to affect you. So some people may need to eat more of some types of food, or do more of certain types of exercise.

## ***Getting rid of toxins.***

It is vital that the body is able to get rid of any toxins or rubbish that it takes in from the environment or that are produced by the body's own processes. There are five organs of elimination; the bowels and kidneys but also the liver, lungs and skin. It is not good enough to simply put in the right nutrients at the top end if the system is overloaded with toxins. There are simple measures that can get the body's eliminative organs functioning better.

## ***The final straw that breaks the camel's back***

By the time you get symptoms there has already been a number of factors contributing to the problem of which we have probably been totally unaware. When we are born it is as though we are an empty glass; slowly we add liquid here, another incident may add liquid there, until in the end one last measure of liquid and the glass spills over; this is when we see the symptoms appear. What we don't see is all the dribs and drabs of liquid that have slowly filled the glass up in the first place. By the same token, removing the symptoms, or the reduction of the liquid level in the glass, does not indicate a return to health. Illness is often caused when a combination of things is added together. For example, we may be born with a genetic tendency to develop asthma; we then may not be breast fed and may be given cows' milk in formula milk; then we may undergo a period of stress if our parents divorce; finally we develop the symptoms of asthma when we move to a polluted part of the city. This is known as the Load Phenomenon and it means that no illness has one cause but is created by a multitude of events coming together until that "final straw that breaks the camel's back".

### ***The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.***

If you took two legs, two arms, a body and a head and put them together you wouldn't have a human being! A human being is more than just a collection of pieces added together. We are whole. What this means is that a problem in one part of the body causes problems in another part of the body. For example, constipation can lead to headaches; irritation of the bowel can lead to allergies affecting the nose and lungs. There can often be a knock-on or domino effect, leading to more and more problems. So often a specialist in one area can miss the bigger picture of what is happening with the whole person.

## **History of Naturopathy**

Naturopathy is not a single therapy. It is not even a group of therapies. It is a philosophy of health which is at least as old as the time of Hippocrates, and that's over 2,400 years ago! Long before the advent of modern pharmaceuticals, people have been using natural means in order to get well. Nearly all civilizations have used herbs and plants to assist the body's natural healing processes. Even many of our modern medicines are based originally on plant or herbal compounds. Hydrotherapy, or the use of water for healing is also an ancient medical tool. Naturopathy often uses these tools along with others to assist the body's own healing mechanisms. The term Naturopathy was first used by Dr. Scheel of New York at the turn of the 19th century, and later adopted by Lust who was a Benedictine monk. Lust had been cured and trained in Germany and set up his own clinic back in America where he practised Naturopathy that included nutrition and natural diet, homeopathy, herbal medicine, hydrotherapy, chiropractic and stress management. Naturopathy developed rapidly in the United States in the early 1900's, until the development of pharmaceutical drugs in the 1930's that threatened to overshadow it. However, with the growing realisation that drugs do not cure disease but merely suppress it, creating their own side effects, many people from the 1960's onwards returned to natural methods such as Naturopathy. Today it is more popular than ever.

## **How is Naturopathy different from orthodox medicine?**

1. The biggest difference between Naturopathy and modern medicine is that pharmaceutical drugs often suppress symptoms and therefore suppress the body's own healing response. Naturopathic methods always seek to work with the body's own healing efforts. For example, a skin inflammation for which you might get steroids from your doctor to make the inflammation go away (suppression) would be treated by a Naturopath as an outer sign of inner imbalance. The treatment may even mean that initially the inflammation gets a little worse as the body is given all the necessary tools to finally resolve the problem.
2. Connections are made between different parts of the body, because the Naturopath treats the whole person. The Naturopath will recognise for example, that your bowel problem could be related to your sinus problem and they might both be related to the stress you are under at work. This is the holistic approach – treating the whole person– is what naturopaths are all about. The orthodox approach sends you to different specialists, and connections between seemingly different conditions are often not made.
3. Naturopathic treatment is always aimed at addressing the underlying causes of disease, so in a person with a recurrent infection the underlying causes may include, for example, lack of certain nutri-

ents and/or being stressed about a relationship problem. These causes would be tackled. Obviously if the current infection was acute or painful symptomatic treatment would also be given, but not in a way that suppressed the natural ability of the body to heal.

4. Treatment must never cause harm or the appearance of side effects. Drugs may help certain symptoms, but because they don't work with the body they often cause other 'side effects' to occur. Naturopathic treatment sometimes causes the body to react such as increased catarrh, increased bowel motions and so on but these are desired effects of the treatment not unwanted 'side-effects'. They do the body good because they assist in the cleaning process.
5. Naturopathy is preventative – whereas people normally only go to their doctor when they are unwell. Naturopathy promotes good health by eating well and by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Orthodox medicine is now beginning to understand more about diet and nutrition and lifestyle factors in preventing disease, but often doctors don't have time to go into the detail that the Naturopath can.
6. Above all, Naturopaths are teachers. They want to educate people about how to take control of their own health. Most conventionally trained doctors again do not have time to teach, so other health care workers have to take on health education. Naturopaths regard themselves as being in partnership with their patients.

## **What Can Naturopaths Help?**

Naturopaths don't treat illnesses they treat people therefore any one can consult a Naturopath. The only thing you need when you consult a Naturopath is the belief that your body is trying to get you better and that with a little guidance you can help yourself to better health.

In particular chronic conditions (problems that have been around for weeks, months or years) respond well to Naturopathic therapies, these include digestive and bowel problems such as irritable bowel syndrome, skin complaints, hormonal problems, arthritis and stress problems. Often Naturopathy can help with acute conditions (problems that have only been there for a few hours or days) such as infections, swellings and pain.

## **What to expect when you consult a Naturopath.**

The diagnosis you may have been given already is taken into account, but is often only a label. The first visit is aimed at developing a thorough understanding of your problem. You will be asked detailed questions about your general health and past medical history. The Naturopath will use orthodox diagnostic methods such as taking the blood pressure and pulse, but may also use other ways of assessing your health such as looking in your eye (iridology), or testing the strength of particular muscles (applied kinesiology). All this information helps the Naturopath piece together what may be contributing to the imbalance.

### ***What Naturopathic Treatment may involve.***

The Naturopath aims to understand what your symptoms are trying to express about the underlying imbalance of the body. Naturopaths always work to the principle of 'first do no harm'; so that they only give advice and use treatments which are not harmful. They only use methods that support the body's own

innate healing power or self-correcting mechanisms. Naturopaths always involve the patient in their own health and recovery and give them as much information and guidance as they can, to help the patient understand how they came to be unwell and how to get better again.

The Naturopaths first step is to guide you on how you can adapt your lifestyle and diet to be more conducive to health. But we also employ certain treatment modalities. Unlike other healthcare practitioners Naturopaths do not employ one specific modality. Doctors for example use medications, Homeopaths use homeopathy, Herbal medicine practitioners use herbs and Osteopaths use manipulation. Naturopaths use many different modalities with the one proviso, *that they are used in a way which works with the body's own healing efforts.*

Whilst the principles of Naturopathy are really common sense applied to health, the Naturopath is qualified to use sophisticated treatments to encourage the body to return to health if it is appropriate.

***The treatments which may be used include:***

- Natural nutrition and diet advice
- Nutritional supplementation
- Packs and wraps, such as a cold pack for a sore throat. Osteopathy or other manipulative techniques
- Massage
- Natural remedies such as herbal remedies

Some Naturopaths may also use acupuncture, homeopathy or other natural therapy as part of the whole naturopathic treatment approach.

## **How Are Naturopaths Trained?**

Naturopaths undergo an intensive training. They study the same basic medical sciences as doctors including anatomy, physiology, pathology and pharmacology. In addition they study, nutrition, clinical dietetics, detoxification techniques and hydrotherapy (the therapeutic effects of water). They study the physical structure of the body and the influence of the emotions on health and disease. They of course study the principles of Naturopathic Medicine. Many Naturopaths have also undertaken post-graduate courses in other treatment areas such as Herbal medicine or Acupuncture.

How can I find my nearest Naturopath?

1. Call the Naturopathic Healthline on 01458 840072. The office is normally staffed from 9.00am to 1.00pm and again from 2.00pm to 6.00pm (UK time) Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
2. Use the website at [www.gcrn.org.uk](http://www.gcrn.org.uk)
3. For printed copies of the Register please send a cheque payable to GCRN for £3.50 to:

The General Council and Register of Naturopaths (GCRN)  
1 Green Lane Avenue,  
Street,  
BA16 0QS

# The General Council and Register of Naturopaths

The General Council and Register of Naturopaths (GCRN) is the leading registering body for Naturopaths in the United Kingdom. It was first incorporated as the Nature Cure Society of Great Britain in 1925 and has been in existence in its present form since 1963.

The objectives of the Register are:

- To establish and maintain standards of education for practitioners and to provide for the inspection of colleges and courses of Naturopathy for the protection and benefit of the public.
- To keep a register of persons qualified to practise Naturopathy in conformity with the standards of the Register.
- To supervise the ethical behaviour and professional conduct of the practitioners enrolled on the Register.
- To encourage the development of Naturopathy on the lines of sound knowledge and practice and to improve the educational standards of its members by encouraging continuing post-graduate education.
- To provide for and promote education, investigation and research into the science and art of Naturopathy and to disseminate the results of such research.
- The GCRN also has representation on or is affiliated to other like-minded British and International bodies, such as the Naturopathic Forum (NatFor), The Prince of Wales' Trust for Integrated Medicine and the Kooperation Europäischer Heilpraktikerverbände (KEH).

All members listed in the Register of Practitioner Members are qualified in Naturopathy and either hold a diploma in Naturopathy or have gained a suitable alternative qualification such as a degree in Naturopathy, or have passed the entrance examination set by the GCRN.

All members are allowed to use the title 'Registered Naturopath' and the letters 'MRN' (Member of the Register of Naturopaths). Many will also use the letters 'N.D' meaning that they have been awarded the Naturopathic Diploma.

Members must abide by a Code of Professional Conduct, published by the GCRN, a copy of which can be obtained from the Secretary on request.

It is important to emphasise that there are other registers of naturopathic practitioners, but no naturopath in Great Britain as yet enjoys the privilege of State registration. The term registered indicates that the practitioner is registered only by the group or society that approves his qualification.

Details about training courses in Naturopathy, or details of local practitioners can be obtained from the Secretary or the website. The GCRN also publishes a leaflet "An Introduction to Naturopathic Medicine", which is also available on request.