



Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathic doctors are guided by six principles. This set of principles, emphasized throughout a naturopathic doctor's training, outlines the naturopathic approach to health and healing and forms the foundation of this distinct form of health care.

First Do No Harm (Primum Non Nocere)

Naturopathic medicine follows three principles to avoid harming the patient:

- Utilize methods and medicinal substances which minimize the risk of harmful side effects;
- Avoid, when possible, the harmful suppression of symptoms;
- Acknowledge and respect the individual's healing process, using the least force necessary to diagnose and treat illness.

The Healing Power of Nature (Vis Medicatrix Naturae)

Naturopathic doctors work to restore and support the powerful and inherent healing ability of the body, mind and spirit and to prevent further disease from occurring. Naturopathic doctors identify and remove obstacles to recovery, facilitating and augmenting this ordered and intelligent healing ability.

Identify and Treat the Cause (Tolle Causam)

The primary goal of the naturopathic doctor is to determine and treat the underlying cause rather than simply managing or suppressing the symptoms. The underlying cause may be due to diet, lifestyle habits, life events, posture or environment. Symptoms are viewed as expressions of the body's natural attempt to heal.

Treat the Whole Person

Each person is unique and requires individualized care. In treating the cause of any condition your naturopathic doctor takes into account not only your physical symptoms, but also mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, social, spiritual and other factors. Disease affects the entire person, not just a specific organ or system. Nutritional status, lifestyle, family history, feelings, environmental stresses, and physical health are all carefully evaluated and addressed.

Doctor as Teacher (Docere)

The goal of a naturopathic doctor is to assist the patient in understanding health and illness. They provide patients with an understanding of the factors that affect health and help individuals find balance and become more capable of maintaining their own health. Naturopathic doctors also acknowledge the therapeutic value inherent in the doctor-patient relationship.

Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Naturopathic doctors apply all of the above principles in a proactive form of disease prevention and health promotion. Naturopathic doctors emphasize healthy daily habits; they assess risk factors and hereditary susceptibility to disease and make appropriate interventions to prevent illness. Health is more than just the absence of disease. Health entails daily functioning on the highest possible levels, and is obtained by proper nutrition, exercise, a balanced lifestyle, positive emotions, thoughts and actions. The capacity for optimal wellness or an improved quality of life is inherent in every body.

