

An Overview of Naturopathic Medicine ©

Fran M. Pinault ND, LAc

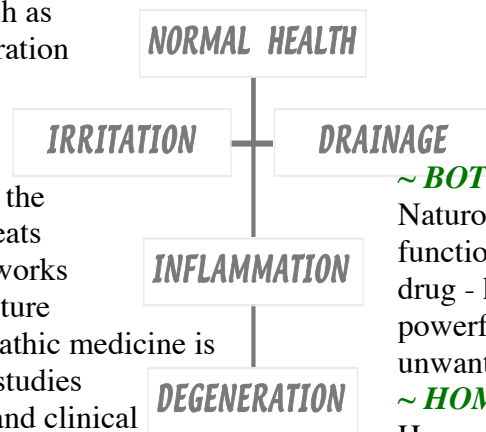
NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE:

~Philosophy of health care

The premise of naturopathic medicine is to help your body heal itself by stimulating the innate healing capabilities we each possess. This is accomplished by removing barriers to health, such as stress, sedentary lifestyles and foods that are not biochemically compatible with the individual. We also correct deficiencies in systems functioning such as digestion, or kidney filtration of impurities from the body. We provide nutrients or botanical medicines to strengthen the body. This approach treats present conditions and works preventively to avoid future illness. Modern naturopathic medicine is derived from scientific studies in functional medicine and clinical observations.

~ Background

Naturopathic medicine has roots from traditional use of botanical medicine and hydrotherapy techniques originating in Europe. Today, Naturopathic Doctors are licensed primary health care providers. They receive four or five years of medical training from accredited naturopathic medical schools. Similar to conventional medical schools, naturopathic medical schools teach the clinical and laboratory skills necessary for proper diagnosis of disease. Students also receive two years of internships focused on integration of naturopathic practices. Some residency programs are available.



~Whole person health care

Naturopathic medicine offers many promising adjunctive therapies to major health concerns as it focuses on balancing the ecology of the body and lifestyle. Natural health care increases vitality and well being, supports the immune system and strengthens bodily functions such as digestion and elimination. Natural medicine therapies can be used for difficult to treat conditions.

~ BOTANICAL MEDICINE

Naturopathic doctors are trained in the scientific and functional use of botanicals. They are also familiar with drug - herb interactions. Botanical medicine is a powerful therapy that often does not produce the unwanted side-effects of prescription drugs.

~ HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathy (meaning like disease) is a system of medicine that uses very minute amounts of substances from plants, animals or minerals.

~ HYDROTHERAPY

Hydrotherapy techniques include immersion baths, contrast hydrotherapy, colonics, constitutional hydrotherapy and others

~ FUNCTIONAL NUTRITION

All biochemical processes in the body occur through the presence of vitamins or cofactors. Minerals are needed for cellular transport activity and to maintain control of the muscular-skeletal systems. Anti-oxidants prevent damage to blood vessels, nerves and cell membranes. Anti-oxidants, vitamins and minerals are often a component of treatment in a functional medicine approach. Functional medicine is used by Naturopathic Doctors.

~ PHYSICAL MEDICINE

Naturopathic physicians are trained in manipulation of the spine and extremities. They also use types of muscle stretching techniques, massage or cranial sacral therapy.