

preventive healthcare & management of disease

Health & Nutrition Donna F. Smith, C.C.N.

There are two principle orientations when we relate to disease. One is combative, the other is preventive.

Let's look at the combative approach first. While a growing number of progressive physicians are on their own initiative, learning to work more and more in a preventive model, the approach to medicine in our colleges and medical academics is almost entirely along combative lines. Conventional medical procedure focuses the majority of its attention and resources on the killing of "germs" and the management of symptoms. The usual practice is to become more involved with the patient after acute or chronic disease has developed to an overt and recognizable state. A usual comment from clients is "My doctor told me to come back in six months if my symptoms are worse and then maybe he can find out what's wrong with me." Then once the disease state is recognizable, an attempt is made to diagnose the disease and to subdue its effect by the administration of drugs, surgical procedures, radiation and/or the utilization of the products of disease in the form of serums, antitoxins, vaccines, etc.

The preventive approach concentrates its attention and resources on preventing the development of disease. The body's "homeostatic" mechanisms are always seeking to balance our systems. This approach focuses on lifestyle issues and natural methods of reinforcing the body's inherent ability to resist dysfunction and remain vital, strong and efficient even when challenged by dysfunctional stress. Rather than waiting until diseases have developed and gained ascendancy in the body, the preventive method endeavors to inform, encourage and assist individuals in maintaining the body in an optimally healthy state, minimizing dysfunction and thus greatly enhancing natural resistance to disease of any kind.

Prevention focuses on how a person is or might be a susceptible host for a given condition or disease. Prevention focuses on identifying nutrient deficiencies, imbalances and dysfunctions and assisting the body in returning to homeostasis.

One preventive method of analyzing the body for its current state of health along with imbalances or dysfunctions which may lead to disease, is through the analysis of blood, urine, saliva and hair.

Let's take, for example, one specific blood test called Total Cholesterol. Let's say your cholesterol was tested and your report was 190. Based upon the medical reference ranges of 133-200, which can vary

depending upon the laboratory used, your physician may inform you that your cholesterol is normal, meaning normal "medically," i.e., 190 is neither below 133 or above 200. These medical reference ranges are provided to alert your physician of possible disease or life-threatening states, or that further testing is necessary to determine this.

The homeostatic reference range for cholesterol is between 150-180. Homeostatic or homeostasis refers to "the state of equilibrium (balance) of the internal environment of the body (such as body chemistry, etc.) that is maintained by dynamic processes of feedback and regulation. In other words, for your body chemistry to be in

homeostasis is to say that you are truly in "perfect" health.

Regarding each blood test run, whether it is cholesterol, glucose, sodium, potassium, etc., for your body to be truly healthy, your test results must be within the homeostasis reference ranges. A cholesterol report of 190, being above 180, would be out of homeostasis and thus your cholesterol would not be considered in good health. Though, again, cholesterol of 190 is not so imbalanced that you are in a disease or life-threatening state, as suggested by the medical reference ranges. However, to be unaware of the meaning of your Total Cholesterol value may cause you to neglect the proper steps necessary to assist your body and bring your cholesterol value back to homeostasis (150-180). This being the case, in time, your cholesterol would continue to increase until one day it would be over 200, and your state of health threatened by disease or a life-threatening state.

The question was asked, if cholesterol is in perfect balance between 150-180 and a disease or life-threatening state below 133 or above 200, what is happening from 133-150 and 180-200? What is happening is that you have moved out of balance, out of perfect health and are progressing towards the disease state. From the moment your biochemistry moves out of balance, signs and symptoms can occur. Have you or someone you know experienced annoying or painful symptoms, and after having a thorough medical exam with tests, been informed that either 1) you are in good health and no cause can be found related to the symptoms, or 2) the symptoms must be psychosomatic (i.e., all in your head)? The reason for this is that often the symptoms experienced are the symptoms of nutritional insufficiencies, deficiencies, body chemistry imbalances or dysfunctional organs or glands which have moved out of homeostasis but not yet reached the medical ranges.

Illustration I provides insight into how you can determine your

ILLUSTRATION I

Total Cholesterol, serum (190)

This illustration reflects the homeostatic and medical reference ranges for cholesterol

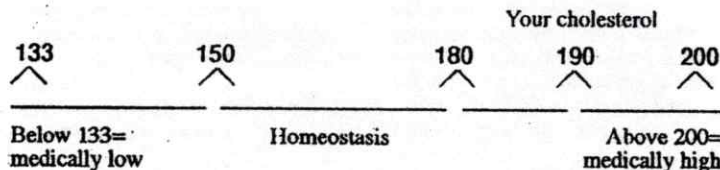
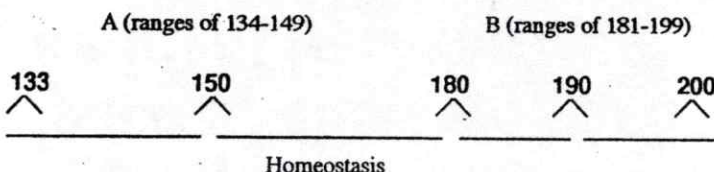


ILLUSTRATION II

Total Cholesterol, serum (190)

This illustration reflects the ranges in between homeostasis and medical ranges in Illustration I and thus indicate body chemistry imbalance, organ/gland dysfunction and nutritional deficiencies or insufficiencies



A and B = Imbalance in body chemistry, lack of equilibrium or homeostasis, onset of nutritional deficiencies or insufficiencies, dysfunctional states. The body begins to signal these imbalances, insufficiencies and dysfunctional states by producing symptoms. Symptoms are the body's communication or alert that attention is needed in specific areas under stress or out of balance. Being aware of this, the person then investigates and seeks out the cause of this imbalance, then assists the body in returning to homeostasis (perfect balance or health) by removing the cause. (Further information is available regarding the various causes.)

Continued on page 6

current state of health, and whether you are in homeostasis or progressing towards a possible disease or dysfunctional state.

From questioning and discovering the meaning of the A and B ranges in Illustration II came the birth of preventive healthcare and clinical nutrition. Would it not be more prudent to identify these imbalances early and assist the body in returning to homeostasis vs. being unaware of its progression through the years until the point of disease when symptoms are at its most severe? At this point, some areas of the body cannot return to homeostasis; it is simply too late.

Having a Comprehensive Health and Clinical Nutrition assessment can provide insight into your current state of health and identify imbalances and dysfunctions that need attention so that you may assist your body in its effort to return to health - homeostasis - thus reversing the disease process. Only when the body is in homeostasis can you be sure of being symptom-free since symptoms are merely the body's way of communicating that you have moved out of balance. With slight imbalances, you may experience inconsistent and minor symptoms, such as low energy and occasional aches and pains. As the imbalances progress, symptoms become more frequent and intense, in the form of chronic fatigue and chronic aches and pains. To alleviate your symptoms only, without investigating and then correcting the cause, would be like dropping bread crumbs along a path so that you may find your way home and then having a bird eat the crumbs.

As Louis Pasteur and his colleagues began discovering various "germs" (bacteria and microbes) and linking them to specific disease states, medical research began to focus more and more on developing various means of destroying these "germs." While billions of dollars have been spent and billions of dollars earned by drug production companies in the pursuit of miraculous "cures" for ill health, insufficient attention has been directed to determining why any disease only affects certain members of the population.

The fundamental question that is attracting increasing attention worldwide, is based on the investigation of the possibility that "germs" are not the primary cause of disease. Are some diseases, or even all diseases, the secondary manifestations of altered or abnormal states of health? An analogy here is: Does the swamp exist first, and the various pests such as the mosquitoes find it to be a good habitat for their propagation, or do such pests pick

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a random landscape and then set about to create a swamp to support them?

When an individual's vitality is lowered (weakened health state) and their tissues become appropriate "soil" for "germs," then we have an ideal host for the onset and development of disease. One who "conscientiously" maintains superior health and vitality by developing an understanding of healthcare, the care of their body and mind, and the effective management of dysfunctional stress, greatly reduces the likelihood of his tissues providing an appropriate "soil" for the propagation of disease. (Refer to our booklet, "Teaming Up for a Healthier You.")

Whenever a person desires to learn a new sport or to purchase new equipment, the tools to success are the appropriate equipment, a manual and coaching/lessons. This is true from learning to play tennis or snow skiing to purchasing a computer. However, many people assume that because they were born with a mind and body that they know how to care for it in a way that produces maximum health and vitality. A comment I hear often from clients after six to twelve weeks on a clinical nutrition program is "I never realized before just how many aches and pains I was tolerating, and I thought I was in pretty good health until they started going away. Then I realized how much more energy I have now and what it is like to live free of pain and discomfort again."

Do the incredible mechanisms of our body with their endless checks and balances, which allow for the function, support and regeneration of all the body's trillions of cells, day in and day out, really need managing? Or

perhaps is our time and effort better focused on improving the lifestyle and environmental factors which have already been shown to interfere with our body's natural regulatory and maintenance mechanisms?

The information provided in this article was obtained from those who are dedicated to the

education and support of the preventive approach wherever possible and those "combative" methods which are non-invasive, in addition to recognizing symptoms as the body's attempt to communicate the need to restore function when "distressed," rather than as an abnormality of nature.

It must be noted that there are unfortunately those cases where prevention has been neglected or traumatic injury has occurred, which necessitates "combative" intervention with whatever means possible. It is at such time of crisis that one is able to fully appreciate the remarkable emergency medical care available to us today. It is in this field of emergency medical care that the field of medicine is truly designed to serve mankind at its best.

Soon we will see the day where people seeking solutions to their healthcare challenges will be able to attend a healthcare clinic and receive the benefits and wisdom of both of these essential approaches, "preventive" and "combative," under the same roof, and within a spirit of mutual admiration and respect.

- Article references: Mark Percival, D.C., N.D., R. Michael Cessna, D.C., D.A.B.C.I., and Donna F. Smith, C.C.N.

A WORD FROM DR. SMITH ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

This is one of the many articles I wrote for the "Wichita Falls Parent" newspaper and it was written before I completed my Ph.D. in Clinical Nutrition, which is why my byline lists my Board-Certified Clinical Nutritionist (C.C.N.) alone.

Everything in this article applies today, with one update. Because of new research, the range for Homeostasis for truly healthy Cholesterol for ages 64 or under is now 180 to 220 and for over 65 is 180 to 299 (even higher for some people). The Lab Ranges today are generally 0-200.

I am delighted to see that the future vision I wrote about in the last paragraph, that Dr. Percival, Dr. Cessna, and I had at that time (1995), is starting to become a reality.

However, what I have observed is often these clinics are recommending synthetic and/or isolated vitamin/mineral supplements, instead of therapeutic whole food supplements and they do not adhere to what I term as "the whole food concept" of healing. Without doing so, they are simply manipulating their patients' biochemistry with Nutritional drugs, instead of Pharmaceutical drugs.

To understand this, read my article titled "Taking Vitamins or Nutritional Drugs?" (The Villager, 05/27/21) posted on my website or you may request that it be emailed to you.