

Healing Chronic Illness with Nutrition and Whole Food Supplements

By Dr. Lakisha Brandon

Let food be thy medicine and thy medicine be thy food.

Hippocrates

At Carolina Partners Wellness Center in Raleigh, I help chronically ill patients restore function to their bodies with a conservative but highly effective approach to healing. There are many different strategies practiced by many health care practitioners that may include extensive lab testing and/or expensive therapeutic protocols, but the only effective way to heal the body is to supply the body with the fuel that it requires to properly function.

I have witnessed chronically ill patients achieve the greatest and quickest results once they understood the importance of establishing a healthy lifestyle routine—in particular, a healthy dietary approach. However, the switch from a standard American diet (SAD) to an anti-inflammatory diet is never easy especially when you're surrounded by fast food restaurants, are "on the go," or when your family chooses not to change their dietary habits as well.

WHY NUTRITION?

There are multiple factors that play an important role in the development of chronic disease, such as poor lifestyle habits, environmental exposures and toxicity, poor maternal nutrition, genetic predispositions, poor access to quality care, previous illnesses, traumas or infections, etc. However, the quality of our diet and nutrition is the largest contributor to all disease. The biggest insult to our body is the excessive consumption of sugar, grain, corn, soy, and other highly processed foods that contribute to excessive amounts of

inflammation in the body. Inflammation caused by these poor dietary choices—over time—is the underlying cause of all chronic illness. I cannot think of a single chronic disease that would be alleviated without implementing some form of nutritional modification.

WHOLE FOOD SUPPLEMENTATION

At each new office visit, I have patients bring all their current supplements, herbal remedies, and homeopathic formulations, so I can investigate the supplements and educate them on why their current supplement protocol is not working. I estimate that 98 percent of the time the quality of the supplements patients use to help manage their chronic illness is extremely poor and essentially a waste of money.

For example, typical calcium carbonate supplements are derived from rocks, or the shells of sea animals. Our body is not equipped to efficiently digest and absorb this form of calcium because it is not a food or typical staple in our diet. A better source of calcium is dark green leafy vegetables, a source our body recognizes as familiar.

The current supplements we recommend at our office are whole-food based, which helps bridge the nutritional gap caused by poor soil quality, poor dietary choices, and insufficient intake of fruits and vegetables. Once you read the label, you will find that the nutrients come from recognizable food sources, such as beets, green leafy vegetables, carrots, and alfalfa.

I've had experience recommending both synthetic supplements and whole-food-based supplements. I no longer use synthetic vitamins in practice, because I haven't seen a drastic

enough change compared to the immediate change I see when patients start taking whole-food supplements.

THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

How do I incorporate nutrition and whole-food supplements into an effective protocol to manage chronic illnesses? First, it is important to understand that as a naturopathic doctor, I do not treat the disease or symptoms the patient presents with. Instead, I treat the whole individual with a combination of nutrition and lifestyle modification, whole-food supplements, herbal medicine, and homeopathy. This is the multi-step therapeutic guideline I use with all patients:

Emphasize a healthy anti-inflammatory diet and proper water intake.

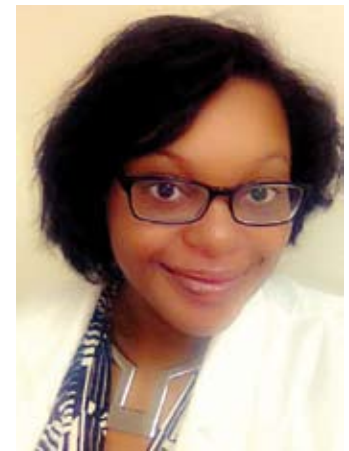
There is absolutely no substitute for these; they are essential for health and healing; your body cannot heal itself if it is not given the optimal environment.

Emphasize and support healthy lifestyle habits by:

- Structuring an exercise routine
- Assisting patients to achieve quality sleep
- Providing patients with resources for mental health counseling and stress reduction techniques

Recommend high quality, whole-food-based nutritional supplements and herbal medicine formulas to help support normal physiological and biochemical processes of the human body without synthetic, laboratory-made derivatives that the body cannot utilize as efficiently.

Recommend homeopathic formulas if necessary if the body needs an additional "push" towards optimal health and healing. **hkh**



Lakisha Brandon, ND, joined Carolina Partners in 2014. She earned her Doctorate of Naturopathic Medicine and completed her internship with an emphasis on mental health at the National University of Health Sciences. She works with all ages at the Carolina Partners Wellness Center, providing health, nutrition, and wellness counseling, homeopathic consultations, herbal medicine, and nutritional supplement prescribing.

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