

When the Cure Is Worse than the Disease



Chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes have increasingly high prevalence in world populations.¹ Such prevalence is rising despite extensive use of prescription medications. Problematically, many people have two or more concurrent chronic disorders and are taking multiple medications. But frequently the various physicians are not in contact and are not aware of the patient's complete list of current prescriptions. No single physician or nurse is managing the patient's array of medications. As a result, potentially harmful drug interactions are a common occurrence.^{2,3} Mistakes are made and patients may suffer serious side effects. In such adverse circumstances, the cure in fact may be worse than the disease.

In today's health care systems, people as patients need to be good custodians of their own care. In many health systems, a patient is lucky if he or she is able to spend more than five uninterrupted minutes with their doctor. Physicians are rushed and harried by numerous responsibilities related to management of their offices, all of which take precious time away from patient interactions. In such an environment, patients need to be proactive to do their best to ensure that recommended treatment is actually going to be helpful, rather than potentially harmful. This is a very difficult task, as most people do not have backgrounds that will help facilitate understanding of such decision-making. But especially for those with a chronic disease, it's critically important to master at least a basic level of information regarding their condition and various types of treatment.

In addition to expanding one's knowledge base, an important long-term strategy is to begin to make lifestyle choices that will support good health. Appropriate and effective lifestyle choices include regular exercise, a healthy diet, and sufficient rest. All three of these key components of good health can be started right now. An exercise program should consist of five 30-minute sessions of vigorous exercise every week. A healthy diet consists of daily selections from all five major food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. A daily diet should include at least five servings of fresh fruit and vegetables every day. Regarding sufficient rest, 7-8 hours of sleep per night is a good average for most people. If you're not waking up feeling rested and refreshed, you're probably not getting enough sleep.

Ultimately, each of us is responsible for our own health and well-being. Prescription medication may be necessary, but of course such treatment is primarily directed toward the effects of a person's disease or disorder. Changes in lifestyle are required to address the underlying causes of such conditions. Beginning to institute and maintaining healthful lifestyle choices will provide long-term benefit for the welfare and well-being of our families and ourselves.

Article from [Delu Chiropractic](#)

1Bauer UE, et al: Prevention of chronic disease in the 21st century: elimination of the leading preventable causes of premature death and disability in the USA. Lancet 384(9937):42-52, 2014

2Rotermann M, et al: Prescription medication use by Canadians aged 6 to 79. Health Rep 25(6):3-9, 2014

3Marengoni A, et al: Understanding adverse drug reactions in older adults through drug-drug interactions. Eur J Intern Med 2014 Oct 10. pii: S0953-6205(14)00282-9. doi: 10.1016/j.ejim.2014.10.001. [Epub ahead of print]