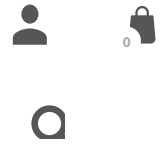


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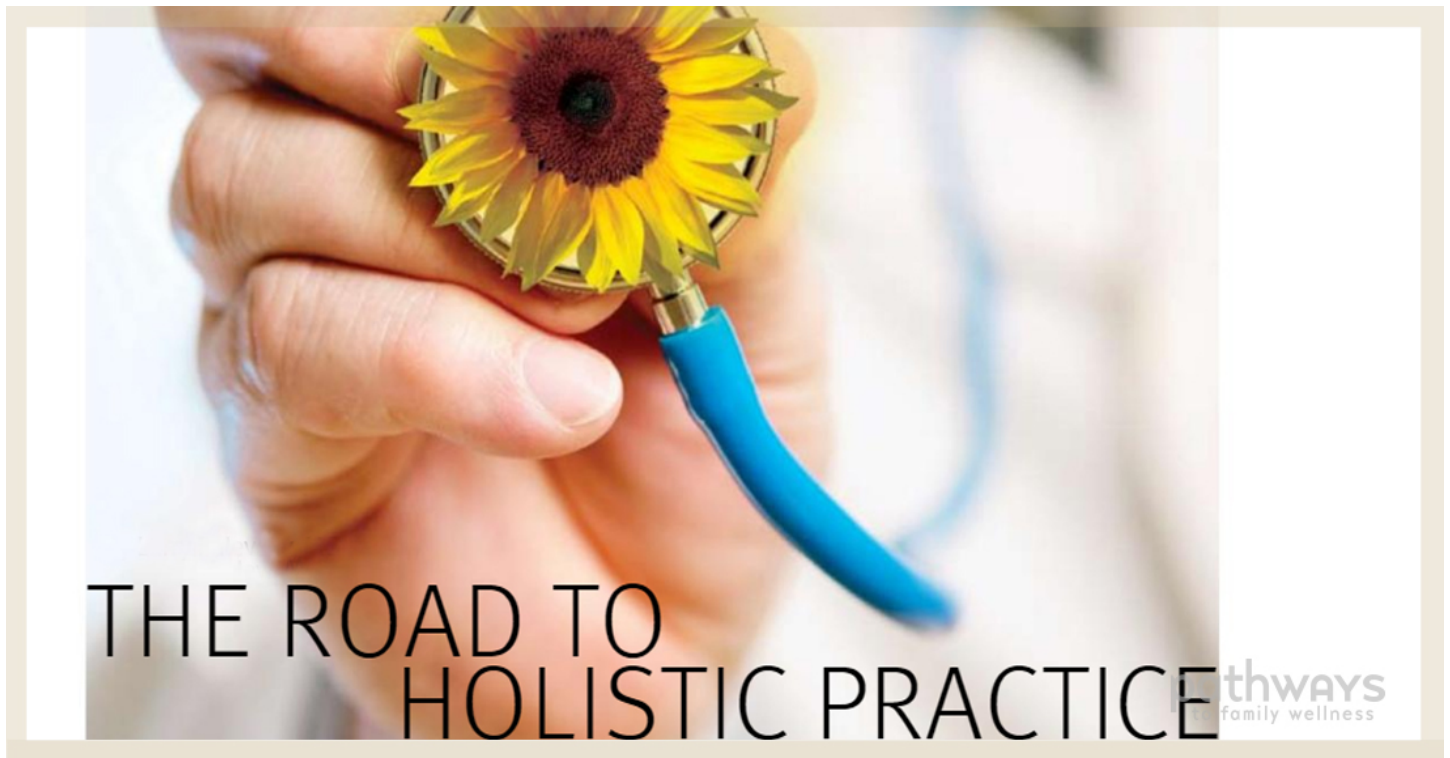
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The Road To Holistic Practice: An Integrated Approach



By Larry Palevsky, MD



Every doctor spends years gaining an education and training for his or her career. Medical school and internships present crucial opportunities for learning. But the



After four years of pediatric residency and fellowship training, I spent nine years caring for sick children in pediatric emergency rooms, delivery rooms, pediatric and neonatal intensive care units and in-patient wards in the New York City hospital system. I developed a large bag of tricks to give quick help to sick children.

Children with asthma seemed to respond well to treatment with inhalers, steroids and leukotriene inhibitors. Yet these same children kept coming back on a regular basis, with recurrent symptoms of cough, wheezing and difficulty breathing. Similarly, children with ear infections always received antibiotics. They often returned to the ER, however, presenting sick again after completing their 10-day courses of medicine. Newborns who appeared depressed and lifeless after difficult births were vigorously resuscitated and invariably admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit for observation and treatment since they didn't perk up quite enough to go to the regular newborn nursery. Often, it took them days to recover and develop adequate tone in their bodies, or demonstrate the ability to feed properly.

My medical training prepared me to intervene during a crisis. I was not prepared, however, to understand the contributing factors that led children to develop acute and chronic childhood illnesses. I was also not taught a vital piece of information, which has transformed my thinking about how to properly treat children: that children's bodies are working to get well when they are sick with the symptoms of common acute and chronic illnesses.

Instead, I was trained to stop children's symptoms and illnesses at all costs, using as many over-the-counter and prescription drugs as I could, to make all the pain and suffering go away. We are taught, after all, that illness and symptoms are bad and must be stopped, especially in our children. I have come to understand, however, that with our use and abuse of over-the-counter medicines, antibiotics and prescription drugs, what we are often really stopping is the natural process of healing and maturation in



Gradually, I began listening to and learning the philosophies and scientific teachings of other healing practices—nutritional and functional medicine, Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines, chiropractic, naturopathy, osteopathy, homeopathy, Reiki, essential oils, energy medicine, shamanism and more. I was exposed to new and exciting ideas about health, wellness, illness and healing. They made a lot of sense to me. Many ideas were contradictory to what I was trained to believe, yet I knew I had opened a door to a perspective on health that resonated with a deeper wisdom.

I began to discover that I could help families learn about prevention and safe treatments for their children when they were sick, assisting them through their symptoms without suppressing them. These children were invariably stronger after recovering from their illnesses. I was surprised to learn that children have the innate capacity to heal. The basic sciences of physiology, immunology and neurology that we learn about in medical school demonstrate how inherently resilient children are, and how capable they are of keeping well and growing stronger if we don't interfere with their biological systems. This scientific and philosophical understanding about our bodies is embraced by every method of healing around the world...except western medicine.

A World of Toxins

The transition to these new ideas was not easy. Colleagues, residents and medical students did not want to hear that the chemicals in children's bodies that triggered their inflammatory symptoms of asthma, eczema and other acute and chronic health conditions were produced directly from the accumulation of toxins in children's lives. They were in the foods they ate, the air they breathed, the skin products we were putting on them and the ingredients of their vaccines. Even the intensity of their nervous system stimulation was detrimental.

their inherent physiology, and they would stop being sick, or recover easily when balance was restored.

Nonetheless, the other doctors continued to prescribe the medicines to children to suppress their symptoms, often unaware that the symptoms of illness were part of their normal biology to expel accumulated toxic chemicals. Instead, with these medications, they were pushing these toxins further into their bodies until the next time the children attempted to get sick, which would be suppressed with medications yet again. In this cycle, children with frequent acute childhood illnesses would end up developing chronic medical conditions. Their bodies would no longer be strong enough to completely expel the increased load of toxic chemicals they accumulated. These new ideas challenged the very foundations of the conventional medical model in which we as doctors were trained.

“Nutrition is not a field of medicine,” were some of the first words I heard when I began medical school in 1983. Through my own education and experiences, however, I have come to see how important nutrition and the health of the intestines are to the overall health of our children. We can find the basis of these truths in the teachings of both western and eastern medical sciences.



This article appeared in Pathways to Family Wellness magazine, Issue 23.

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