

NHA Philosophy and Principles of Health and Disease: Unity of Cause and a Modern Hygienic Perspective

At a time when close to four trillion dollars is being spent on disease care in the U.S., health policy experts have suggested that 75 percent of this money is being spent on conditions that can be resolved by better lifestyle choices. Simply put, by embracing the principles of hygienic living and the basic requirements of life it emphasizes, chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and cancer (diseases that demand the most health care dollars), can be prevented, reversed, and eliminated. Unfortunately, the general mindset and perception of health and disease in our culture has been distorted, and it affects our ability to align with the remarkable capability that exists within each of us for true health freedom and autonomy.

The National Health Association has a unique and profound hygienic perspective of health and disease that is grounded in the ability of all living things to regulate and heal themselves. Like a tightrope walker trying to maintain balance, the body is constantly making myriad adjustments to maintain balance in the face of an ever-changing and challenging environment.

Health, or wholeness, is a state of optimal function, ease, and balance. It is the direct expression of the inborn ability and wisdom of the body that maintains every function, hormone, and chemical process within normal healthy limits (homeostasis) regardless of environmental factors that provoke extreme challenges to this stability. For example, under normal healthy conditions, whether the outside temperature

is 80 degrees or 5 degrees below zero, our body temperature is maintained around 98 degrees.

Health is not a commodity or thing that can be bought or sold, nor is it a by-product or reward of medical treatments or alternative therapies. It is a process and state of well-being and optimal human potential that is the direct result of how well you consistently incorporate the basic needs of life: optimum plant nutrition, adequate exercise, sleep, fresh air, water, stress-response management, and supportive human relationships. Health is the direct, unequivocal result of your commitment to maintain conditions and choices that allow optimal function to occur while removing factors that interfere with its outcome.

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There are no treatments, therapies, physicians, or healers that heal the body. The body heals itself. It is your responsibility to make choices that support the body's healing potential while removing the impediments that retard or interfere with the healing process. If you have a cut, you can clean the wound to create an optimal environment for healing to occur, but the

healing process is out of your control. The body automatically directs and orchestrates the remarkable symphony of recovery and healing.

However, when you do not appropriate the basic needs of life effectively by making poor nutrition and lifestyle choices, conditions of irritation, toxicity, inflammation, and cellular damage are established in the body. This creates a lack of ease, or dis-ease, that is a state of imbalance or simply a deviation from wholeness. Under these conditions, the body will do anything in its power to remove any and all factors that interfere with health and healing. As a result, a panorama of remedial actions (symptoms) will be set in motion, including fever, sneezing, coughing, and discharge/elimination through skin, bowels, lungs, urine, and feces, to minimize and eliminate the conditions that pose a threat to the integrity of the body.

These remedial actions, especially in the early or acute response, are the symptoms of disease and are simply a part of the process by which the body protects itself to facilitate the outcome of health. In this light, acute symptoms are not antagonists of life and health but rather warning signs that things are out of balance—essential, remedial vital actions the body deems absolutely necessary to reduce or eliminate a perceived threat to healthy function. As uncomfortable as they can be, symptoms should not be suppressed, but rather respected and supported while you address the important information they provide.

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Something is out of balance, and the body is communicating and demanding your full attention and effort to address the underlying causes of your discomfort. In short, it is essential to focus on the cause and not get lost in the effects.

Unfortunately, the medical system and most other so-called therapeutic systems spend much of their effort medicating, treating, and eliminating symptoms while the true causes of discomfort and disease are rarely dealt with. Sadly, because of the typical medical indoctrination of our culture, most of us have been brought up to fear our own vitality, the vital expression of remedial actions the body creates for our benefit and protection. We feel compelled at the first signs of symptoms to do everything we can to medicate or palliate them out of existence. This is dangerous because it allows the true causes of damage and toxicity to linger longer beyond your awareness, furthering more chronic destruction over time.

On a continuum from life to death, if you do not address and remove the true causes of disease, the damage, irritation, and toxicity arising from poor lifestyle choices will progress from the acute stage to promote chronic cell and organ damage over time, resulting in chronic degenerative disease, the widespread loss of organ function, potential development of cancer, and eventually premature death. But keep in mind that at every step along this path to destruction, loss of function, and death, the body never stops trying to remove the

consequences of destructive choices and to reverse these changes in the direction of health until the accumulation of damage eventually overwhelms the resources and capabilities of the body to establish a point of no return. It is up to every one of us to make the choices that allow health to occur by removing the risk factors that interfere with healing.

In line with this discussion of true cause and effect, it is important to understand and embrace the simple, profound truth that the same biological needs that support the normal functions of life and health are the same things you need, even more rigorously applied, when you have deviated from health. If rest and hydration are essential for life and health, then when you have created a state of disease, rest and hydration need to be addressed and applied even more emphatically and rigorously. It is a mistake to think that the hygienic biological needs of life are only important for maintaining health and the normal functions of life, but that in a state of disease, you need to add adjunctive or invasive treatments, drugs, supplements, etc. to recover health. The same conditions that promote health are the very things you need to recover health when you have deviated from health.

When you were developing in the womb, there was a time when organs took on their own identity. Heart became a little bit different than brain, brain became different than kidney, etc., and the way these different organs with their different identities respond to similar conditions of irritation, toxicity,

and inflammation leads to a wide range of symptoms and the illusion of many separate "diseases." The fact is that the basic underlying cause of irritation, toxicity, inflammation, compromised blood/oxygen supply, and loss of function is always the same. The only thing different is location.

It is also important to understand how the unity of cause affects the expression of disease. For example, science has clearly shown that eating a diet high in animal and processed foods provides a concentration of factors, including refined CHO, fats (saturated, trans-, and oxidized), glycated proteins, arachidonic acid, oxidized cholesterol, and salt, that provoke chronic irritation and inflammation throughout the body. This inflammation causes damage to all cells, including blood vessel walls, that can create plaque and block blood and oxygen supplies to all the vital organs of the body. As organs are deprived of blood-carrying oxygen and nutrients, their cells become less and less functional, leading to cell death and chronic degenerative disease in the heart, brain, genitals, kidneys, etc. Any of these organs can be a leading link in your particular genetic chain or your personal predisposition (your diathesis), leading to a set of symptoms that are a direct function of the individual identity and variability of these organs.

By adopting a hygienic lifestyle, you will eliminate the underlying cause of disease regardless of where it is located and promote healing in any and all parts of the body. This is the profound and powerful message that is within the reach of everyone. It is the fundamental wisdom that the NHA is committed to sharing for the sake and health of humanity.



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