

Health

NURSE'S NOTES Linda Napier

Naturopath works like 'Sherlock Holmes'

"My father passed away from diabetes, and it was a long process — about 15 years," said Dr. Shawn Carney.

"He insisted on not taking care of himself, and I saw him increase his medications from oral to injected insulin, from once a day to twice a day, and the complications going from neuropathy to gangrene, amputations, kidney failure.

The whole cycle was preventable, Carney said.

"It was certainly his own choice and free will. I tried everything from different cookbooks to making meals ... but he ... was the man of the house who didn't want to eat his vegetables, a meat and potatoes man.

"So I became a vegetarian," Carney added, laughing.

He also became a naturopathic physician and today focuses on caring for those with diabetes, along with innumerable other conditions, in his at-the-Newtown-flagpole clinic, Northeast

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Dr. Shawn Carney, naturopathic physician in Newtown

Natural Medicine.

Carney said diabetes is an epidemic in this country, but much can be done with natural alternatives.

Naturopathic medicine is defined by the state of Connecticut as "the science, art and practice of healing by natural methods."

"A naturopathic doctor is the general medicine doctor of holistic medicine. We're trained in chiropractic manipulations, in energetic medicine like homeopathy and acupuncture, as well as bio-

chemical medicines, he added.

"We get introduced to all this, and then we're able to use the diagnostic testing and come up with treatment plans and pull from all the different areas as needed."

The intuitive approach, Carney said, is to go with the least invasive therapies first, using vitamins, minerals, amino acids and neurotransmitters — substances that our bodies make.

As a naturopathic physician, Carney can order the conventional tests done at local laboratories, but he also uses more advanced specialty labs for studies that can't be done in the area.

With a small sample of hair, a patient can be screened for the presence of heavy metals or mineral sufficiency.

"You can test for amino acids with a simple finger stick," he added. "From a clinical perspective, it's important to know, and amino acids are easily supplemented."

He tests for cortisol levels, as well as those of the many hormones based on cholesterol, using four different samples of saliva that are collected throughout the day.

"Cortisol is what wakes you up, what helps keep you going during the day," he said. "Production begins about 3 or 4 in the morning and it increases, so that you're waking up about 6.

"Its production is tapering off around noon and really getting low so by the end of the day, so you're tired and want to go to sleep ...

"By doing multiple samples in the course of the day, you're able to get a lot more information than the static number you would get from one blood sample drawn at 8 or 9 in the morning — that's only one little snapshot."

Although cholesterol has a bad reputation, it's very important for the body. Produced by the liver, cholesterol is the chassis on which the sex hor-

mones, cortisol and even vitamin D (which is actually a hormone), all find their base. They can all be measured by testing saliva.

"In a urine sample, you can collect neurotransmitters, so in one day's worth of samples, very noninvasive, you can look inside to see what's happening hormonally and actually look at information about biochemistry and how the brain is operating — very important for patients with ADD, ADHD, depression and anxiety."

Carney equates his work to that of a detective.

"I had a patient whose primary complaints were 'brain fog,' or loss of concentration, and allergies. Concentration is often affected by starchy food, so not only did I do a glycemic workup, but I screened him for celiac disease.

"The genetic aspects came back negative, but the IGA was extremely low. Immunoglobulin an-

tibody is produced for mucous linings and secretions, and vast quantities are supposed to be in the GI (gastrointestinal) system," he said.

"If they're not present, then there is a high risk of a chronic infection from something like candida. One of the symptoms of a chronic candida infection is poor concentration and memory loss, and if someone is deficient in IGA, it makes perfect sense that they would have many problems with allergies," he said.

"So that's the detective work, trying to put things together."

For information about Dr. Shawn Carney and Northeast Natural Medicine, call 1-800-723-2962 or visit info@northeastnatmed.com.

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