

## **Information : The Key to Wellness**

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Even in my line of work, which is psychotherapy, I am amazed at how many of my clients are dealing with chronic pain, degenerative illnesses or autoimmune diseases, which radically affect their ability to enjoy life. Poor health creates more stress, which in turn exacerbates health problems. Pain interferes with sleep, which is so essential to the healing of the physical body. Migraine headaches, back pain, and muscle pain contribute heavily to depression. When in pain, a person can't do the things they want to do, the things they perhaps used to be able to do. The bottom line is that physical health may be a significant precursor to mental health. In my practice, I have noted an increasing numbers of clients referred by their physicians for depression secondary to health problems.

That is only one reason why prevention, understanding how to get and stay well, is so important in our society today. Another reason is the high cost of health insurance. Health insurance is designed to offset the expense of treating injuries and serious medical illnesses. It usually does not cover the kinds of treatments that will prevent illness and support wellness, such as biomedical screenings and scans for the well person, nutritional counseling and supplements, massage, chiropractic, etc. Health insurance is not designed for these purposes. Our best insurance may be our healthy lifestyle practices.

Our bodies are designed to digest the foods that grow on the earth, not hydrogenated oils, refined sugars and flours, artificial colorings and flavorings, chemical preservatives, hormones fed to the animals we eat, and pesticides sprayed on crops. At some point, the body's beautiful system of excreting toxins becomes overwhelmed and organs start to malfunction. Our food is only as good as the soil it is grown in, and the body is only as good as the nutrition it can absorb. The digestive and circulatory systems can become clogged by much of the average American diet. Why are we surprised when our nation has such high rates of heart disease, cancer, autoimmune, and degenerative diseases? Certainly, genetics play a role in predisposing an individual to disease, but to beat the odds, it is helpful to understand the principles of good nutrition and wellness.

Stress and lack of exercise also contribute to the breakdown of our health. Creating a balanced lifestyle in these hectic times can be a challenge, but well worth the effort. We need to eat foods that support our physical bodies and brains. We need to exercise to maintain skeletal-muscular fluidity and integrity. We need to play and find quiet times to de-stress and get in touch with our heart's desires. We need loving relationships and the time to invest in them.

We need lots of clean water to hydrate the body and help flush out toxins.

Visitors and residents are attracted to our mountains not only for their beauty, but also for the slower pace of life, the clear air and clean water. In addition, the mountains seem to have a healing property all their own. In recent years, an increasing number of practitioners of the healing arts have also been drawn to our mountains. As a natural outgrowth of this phenomenon, Mountain Healing Arts Association (MHAA) was created in 2003 with the purpose of promoting the healing and wellness of body, mind, and spirit. MHAA serves as a resource to the mountain communities for information about health and wellness services, products and practitioners. Please visit our website at [www.mountainhealingarts.org](http://www.mountainhealingarts.org) or call our toll free number (888) 632-4966.

In these times, it is in our best interest to take personal responsibility for our health. The health and well being of the nation is not the first priority of the pharmaceutical industry, the insurance industry, and the processed food industry. If we educate ourselves about wellness, we will make less use of health insurance, and hopefully, drive the cost of insurance down. In the long run, perhaps everyone could afford to be insured, and situations like the recent supermarket strike could become a thing of the past.

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