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Kelly Upcott obtained her Bachelor of Science from the University of Windsor before graduating from the four-year naturopathic medicine program at The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in 2003. In addition to naturopathy, Kelly has received specialized training in Bowen Therapy and Doula services. She enjoys working with families and has a special interest in pediatrics and women's health.

Naturopathic Medicine is a unique and comprehensive approach to improving health and treating illness. Focusing on prevention and the use of natural substances and treatments, naturopathic doctors stimulate the body's ability to heal itself.

The primary goal of naturopathic treatment is to address the cause of illness, rather than simply treat or suppress symptoms. The patient is seen as a whole person and the ND takes the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions into account when diagnosing and developing a treatment plan.

The primary methods of treatment include herbs, homeopathy, nutrition, acupuncture and Chinese medicine, hydrotherapy and life-style counseling.

Renaissance Chiropractic Natural Health Centre

Is Stress Ruining Your Life?

By Dr. Kelly Upcott, Naturopath

It is a difficult task to find anyone in our society that is not under some amount of stress. Stress is a normal part of life. It comes in many shapes and forms. Stress may be caused by emotional stressors like work, relationships, or finances; and it may be caused by chemical stressors like pollution, bacteria or nutritional deficiencies. A little stress can be healthy as it gives us energy and keeps our minds alert.

Our bodies have natural coping mechanisms to deal with stress, known as the "fight or flight" response of the body. The adrenal gland is responsible for this response through its production of cortisol and other hormones. Our heart races, our blood pressure rises and blood flow is redirected from digestion and non-essential organs to our brain, muscles, lungs, and heart. This is meant to be a temporary phase but how much is too much?

At some point stress leads to mental and physical exhaustion and depletes the immune system's resistance, leaving us vulnerable to all kinds of illnesses. Some common effects of stress are tense

muscles, headaches, stomach cramps, exhaustion, insomnia, diminished sex drive, depression, memory problems, and panic attacks. Research shows that stress may be the cause of at least 80% of all health problems and can play a significant role in many chronic illnesses, including cancer and heart disease.

There is no denying that stress affects our health. How well we handle stress depends on the strength of our immune system and our nutritional status. There are many supplements that offer additional protection from the effects of stress. The B vitamins support the nervous system and help build resistance to stress. Calcium and Magnesium help calm the nervous system. Vitamin C supports the adrenal glands and helps keep our immune system strong. Rescue remedy is a combination of five different Bach flower remedies and is excellent for periods of acute stress and anxiety. Herbs like chamomile, lemon balm, hops and valerian are relaxants and can reduce the symptoms of tension in the body. Herbs like ashwagwanda, licorice and

ginseng can offer our adrenals some needed support. Add lavender oil to a bath to relax tense muscles and calm nerves.

Take positive steps to reduce the stress in your life but be realistic and try to avoid several major life changes at one time. A healthy lifestyle and diet are key for stress management. Rhythm is essential since sleeping and eating irregularly does not allow the body to rejuvenate enough to cope with stress. Go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning. Don't eat on the run and take time to enjoy your food. Include foods high in B vitamins, such as whole grains, green vegetables, eggs, and lean meats. Regular exercise is important and there are many excellent relaxation techniques to help calm the nervous system, such as yoga, tai chi or meditation. Walk, swim or bicycle for at least half an hour three times per week.

Be good to yourself, eat well, and do things you enjoy.

-Dr. Kelly Upcott BSc ND

Registered Naturopathic Dr.

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