

expert contributor



## INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

By Audrey Crumbley, MD, Magnolia Medical Group

**I**ntegrative Medicine focuses on the whole person and uses multiple therapies to obtain optimal health. Traditional medicine, chiropractic, nutrition, exercise and physical therapy, counseling, acupuncture and biofeedback, massage, herbal therapy all may be used. Providers coordinate the treatment plan. Patients participate in treatment decisions.

Evidence-based therapies are treatments backed by quality studies with "proven" effectiveness. American studies are often sponsored by drug companies, so the emphasis in American medicine has been on using medications. Newer therapies such as regenerative medicine have multiple small studies but no unifying protocols yet. Nutritional studies usually come from Europe or Asia.

We operate using the principle of "First, do no harm." We use medication only if really needed. If a condition can be treated by lifestyle modifications that is always preferable to medication.



However, medication can reduce risk of complications of disease, and we prescribe when needed.

One of our goals is to treat and prevent pain. This is truly where an integrative approach works so much better than just pills.

Regenerative medicine involves the use of various biologic materials to stimulate the body's own healing capacity. Stem cells can develop into any tissue, and can be derived from fat, platelet rich plasma, bone marrow, amniotic tissue, or umbilical cord tissue. Some of these preparations may not contain very many stem cells, but they do contain various growth substances and can stimulate the body to mobilize its own stem cells. Optimal healing requires optimal nutrition!

Specific drugs can often make patients feel worse. NSAIDs and steroids inhibit healing; statins often cause muscle pain, tendonitis, and can also inhibit healing; newer antibiotics may cause psychiatric issues...the list goes on. But drugs are 60% plant-derived, and partially responsible for our increased longevity. Improved nutrition over the last century is also contributory.

Often-forgotten elements of well-being include good sleep and treatment of depression. We address these problems at Magnolia Medical. If sleep is not restorative, then no healing can take place.

Integrative medicine therapy is personalized to each patient with an attempt to have the patient involved in his or her treatment.