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Understanding Disease

by Raymond Francis

The next major advance in health will be determined by what people are willing to do for themselves. However, willingness is only part of the equation—the other is knowing what to do. In my book *Never Be Sick Again*, I outlined a new model of health based on the revolutionary concept of one disease. As varied and complex as "diseases" appear to be, all disease is the result of malfunctioning cells. Cellular malfunction is then the one disease. Modern medicine believes there are thousands of diseases, but viewing all diseases as one presents a profound opportunity—the opportunity to take the mystery out of disease and to gain power over it.

The enormous pandemic of chronic and degenerative disease sweeping the world today is characterized by complex neuro-immuno-hormonal-gastrointestinal dysfunction. Complexity aside, all disease occurs at the molecular and cellular level, and we now know that virtually all disease has common causes and common solutions.

There is only one disease and there are only two causes of disease: deficiency and toxicity. Cells lacking what they need or exposed to something harmful will malfunction. Unless cells malfunction, there can be no disease. The thousands of different diseases we experience are merely the effects of thousands of combinations of deficiencies and toxicities acting through a combination of inherited genes, the environment, and our beliefs, thoughts, and emotions. *Preventing or reversing disease is about preventing and reversing cellular malfunction.*

The amount of disease in America today is astonishing. More than three out of four Americans have a diagnosable chronic disease. This is happening because almost all Americans are in toxic overload and are chronically deficient in one or more nutrients. Our unprecedented exposure to toxic chemicals is impairing cellular machinery, causing cellular malfunction and disease. Chronic deficiency of even one nutrient will decrease the efficiency of all the others, causing cellular malfunction and disease.

As the amount of deficiency and toxicity in our society continues to increase, illnesses that used to affect only the elderly are now epidemic in younger people. Children are born with defective brains and immune systems. Historically, cancer affected only 0.1 percent of the population. A century ago it was 3 percent. Today, half our population will get cancer in their lifetime. Unless we get this chronic disease epidemic under control, the economic and social effects on our nation will be catastrophic.

Fortunately, we have the knowledge to end this epidemic. By addressing how to prevent and reverse the two causes of cellular malfunction, we can prevent and reverse almost all disease. But first we must educate—prevention being our most important tool. Let us examine some of the cellular malfunctions that are common denominators of disease and explore how we can prevent and reverse them. First, let's examine the sodium/potassium ratio in the cell.

Sodium and potassium are minerals critical to cell function, but they must be in balance. Modern dietary practices create serious imbalances. Our ancestors consumed low sodium, high-potassium diets. Their sodium/potassium ratio was a healthy 1:4, the result of eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Our current ratio is reversed to an unhealthy 4:1, the result of too much salt (especially in processed foods) and too few fresh fruits and vegetables. Cells function as little batteries. They have an electrical charge created by the difference in the amount of potassium inside the cell and the amount of sodium outside. By changing the sodium/potassium ratio in our diet, and consequently inside each cell, we damage the "battery of life" and interfere seriously with the body's self-regulation and repair functions. For example,

increasing the dietary sodium of laboratory animals will accelerate cancer metastasis. *Preventing and reversing this common cause of disease is simple: eat less salt and eat more fresh fruits and vegetables.* That's how easy it is to achieve power over disease!

Another common denominator of disease is abnormal cellular pH. Normal cellular pH is 7.4; maintaining it is critical. If your cells become too acidic or too alkaline, certain functions are inhibited and others enhanced. This causes cellular malfunction and disease—cancer is commonly a disease of too much acidity. Where is this acidity coming from? It's coming from a diet rich in acid-forming foods such as sugar, white flour, milk products, and cola drinks. Colas combine sugar with phosphoric acid producing a powerful acidic effect. *Cutting acid-forming foods from your diet, while eating a diet rich in alkaline foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, and supplementing with minerals will work to balance pH and to prevent and reverse disease.* It's that easy!

Improperly constructed cell membranes are another common cause of disease. Each cell has a wall called the cell membrane. Everything that goes in or out of the cell has to pass through the membrane, a "gatekeeper" making sure only the right things go in and out. Improperly constructed cell membranes cause cellular malfunction and disease. To prevent and reverse disease, the billions of new cells we create every day must be constructed with the proper building materials. The vegetable and hydrogenated oils common to our diet are the wrong building materials. Historically the ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 oils in our diet was a healthy 1:1. Today it is an unhealthy 20:1. Fish and flaxseed oils are the preferred building materials. *Cut out all processed oils and supplement with healthy oils.* How easy it is!

Common to almost all disease is a process called inflammation. Inflammation generates free radicals, which damage cell membranes, DNA, and cellular machinery. The result is aging and disease. To prevent or reverse aging and disease, it is necessary to prevent or reverse inflammation. Inflammation is caused primarily by eating the standard American diet. Sugar, white flour, milk products, farmed fish and meat, and processed oils are all pro-inflammatory. By consuming a diet high in pro-inflammatory chemicals and low in anti-inflammatory chemicals, most of our population is now suffering from chronic inflammation and disease. Making matters worse, the American diet makes people fat. Two out of three Americans are overweight, and fat cells produce a constant flood of inflammatory chemicals. *To prevent and reverse inflammation, avoid inflammatory foods and eat a diet rich in fresh vegetables, fruits, and antioxidant supplements.* It's that easy!

Tragically, children today do not have to wait to get sick. They are born sick. The deficiencies and toxicities of the parents affect the health of the fetus, thereby affecting that child's health for a lifetime and the health of grandchildren yet to come. In the early 20th century, Francis Pottenger, M.D. proved that eating processed foods affected the health of the children and grandchildren of parents eating such a diet. Today processed foods are the staple of our diet. That's why most of our children are born with abnormal brains and bodies, even if it's not immediately apparent. For example, throughout human evolution, our brains grew larger. Now the process has reversed. The brains of our children are getting smaller, and reduction in brain size has been accompanied by an epidemic of behavioral disorders, violence, suicides, and poor academic performance.

To maximize lifelong health, a growing fetus must be supplied with all the raw materials it needs, and it must be protected from toxins that could disrupt its delicate construction process. Unfortunately, this rarely happens in America today. Instead, fetuses are commonly deficient in essential raw materials and are exposed to numerous toxins. Poor nutrition in utero and during infancy programs genes for the early on-set of major chronic diseases. Good nutrition is also required for detoxification. Without nutrients to support detoxification pathways, toxins persist and do more damage.

Among the many toxins passed from mother to child causing disease in the unborn is mercury. Mercury, from dental fillings, vaccinations, and fish, interferes with enzymes that control how the fetal brain is

structured. Even minor changes in brain structure will affect behavior, learning, higher-level thinking, and other brain functions, including control of the immune, hormonal, and digestive systems. Fluoride is another problem. Fluoridated water, toothpaste, and fluoride-contaminated foods pose an enormous health risk to the unborn, lowering their IQs and dumbing down our population. Aspartame, another common hazard, is an artificial sweetener found in diet drinks and foods. It breaks down into a number of highly toxic chemicals that can damage fetal DNA, alter brain function, and contribute to cancer. *To ensure the health of the unborn, we must supply a fetus with everything it needs and protect it from harm.*

No discussion of disease would be complete without addressing how modern medicine contributes to deficiency, toxicity, and disease. Medical intervention is one of our leading causes of disease, and arguably our leading cause of death. Medicine's archaic and unscientific approach to health and disease has led to a series of epic blunders: x-rays, vaccinations, unnecessary surgery, and prescription drugs. Each of these cause cellular malfunction and have devastating effects on health.

X-rays, which are mostly unnecessary, damage DNA and cellular machinery and have been cited as essential cofactors in 60 percent of cancers and 70 percent of heart disease. Vaccinations have been cited as "a medical assault on the immune system." Perhaps the greatest blunder of all has been antibiotics. Antibiotics fundamentally alter body chemistry, causing disease of every description.

Antibiotics alter the microbial balance in the gastrointestinal tract, leading to a cascade of events with devastating effects. The gastrointestinal tract functions both as a brain and as a master endocrine gland that controls the immune system. Changing the balance of microorganisms in the gut alters its chemistry, affecting both the nervous and the immune systems. The resulting malfunctions are largely responsible for our epidemic of neurodegenerative disorders (Alzheimer's, ALS, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, etc.) and immune disease (allergies, asthma, arthritis, lupus, AIDS, etc.). Abnormal gut flora contributes to cellular deficiency by inhibiting digestion and the production of critical nutrients, and by causing malabsorption. It contributes to toxicity through the production of abnormal bacterial and fungal endotoxins. These toxins interfere with protein synthesis and the production of energy, causing fatigue and ultimately increasing cell death. *Since antibiotics are almost completely unnecessary, there being safer and better alternatives, it makes sense to avoid them.* How easy it is!

Knowing that disease is the result of malfunctioning cells and understanding what makes them malfunction gives us the power to prevent and reverse disease. By paying attention to providing our cells with what they need, avoiding toxins, and living a good lifestyle, we can put an end to our epidemic of chronic disease. Begin today to make these changes, and you will go beyond health as you know it.

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