

# FOOD AS MEDICINE EVERYDAY

Reclaim Your Health  
With Whole Foods

Julie Briley, ND & Courtney Jackson, ND

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## Foreword

My wife, Charlee, and I are in our mid-eighties now, and it seems like only yesterday the people of the world were of average size. The overnight prevalence of obesity and its accompanying ill health seem to have come about rapidly and with great severity in affecting our Western society's health. The public's response to the wholesome whole grain foods we and our company, Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods, have produced over the last forty-one years, brings with it the realization that a nutrient-rich, whole grain diet is one of the key elements to combating the health issues we face today.

Our concern for the world around us—especially children—caused us to look for a vehicle that would address some of these serious health issues. The Ending Childhood Obesity (ECO) project was birthed through our collaboration with the National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM),\* the naturopathic college in Portland, Oregon. NCNM appeared to be the perfect partnership whereby we could develop a valuable and worthwhile program educating our community about a healthy, whole grain diet, along with an understanding of the basics of good nutritional practices.

NCNM was ready, willing, excited, and they had one very eager physician willing to take on this incredible project: Dr. Courtney Jackson. Within the first year, the popularity of the ECO project was contagious. It soon became necessary to bring on a second physician to help oversee additional classes. Dr. Julie Briley joined the Food as Medicine Institute, and the Food as Medicine Everyday series soon developed following the success of the ECO project. Dr. Briley brought with her the same excitement and commitment to the program. Together they make a dynamite team, educating hundreds of families in the Portland community. They truly are the key to the Food as Medicine Everyday program success.

Charlee and I are so pleased with the growth, continued development, and refinement of the programs coming from the Food as Medicine Institute. Beginning

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\*In 2016 National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM) became the National University of Natural Medicine (NUNM).

with just one lead naturopathic physician and one twelve-week series, the program has now expanded to five physicians, eighteen series yearly, and has reached over one thousand families to date. This is truly amazing.

At the beginning of our involvement with Dr. Jackson, we talked with her about publishing a book if the project proved successful. We are so pleased to see that the project has proved successful, and here is that book. Congratulations Dr. Jackson and Dr. Briley!

To your good health!

Bob and Charlee Moore

## Preface

Food is intimately woven into the culture of naturopathic medical training and clinical practice. Since its inception in the United States in the early 1900s, the profession of naturopathic medicine has always incorporated the healing power of food into patients' prescriptions. The profession has evolved and adapted with modern medicine, but it has not forgotten the original connection to food as medicine. In the United States, naturopathic medicine is currently defined as a distinct system of primary health care that, like conventional medicine, includes the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness. It incorporates the best of both the art and science of traditional and conventional medical practices. NDs are trained to diagnose and treat acute and chronic health conditions, from hay fever to heart disease, from infancy through adulthood. NDs may also provide holistic medical treatment for patients who are using conventional medicine.

Naturopathic medicine is distinguished from other medical professions by its principles:

The Healing Power of Nature (*Vis Medicatrix Naturae*),  
Identify and Treat the Causes (*Tolle Causam*),  
First Do No Harm (*Primum Non Nocere*),  
Doctor as Teacher (*Docere*),  
Treat the Whole Person,  
Prevention.

This underlying belief in and understanding of the healing power of nature, including the potential for a whole foods diet to prevent, treat, and reverse many chronic diseases, is truly unique to this group of primary care physicians.

When prescribing a treatment plan, naturopathic doctors follow a therapeutic order that does not rely first on prescription medications or surgery. Instead, they may prescribe one of many treatment options to address the whole person. Examples include:

clinical nutrition and prescribing food as medicine

- nutritional supplements
- botanical medicine
- homeopathy
- lifestyle counseling
- physical medicine, such as soft tissue and joint manipulation
- hydrotherapy, the application of hot and cold water to the body to stimulate a healing response
- intravenous (IV) therapy including vitamin and mineral infusions
- minor surgery
- prescription medications in some areas of the United States

Naturopathic treatments are in high demand. According to the 2007 National Health Interview Survey, which included a comprehensive survey of the use of complementary health practices by Americans, an estimated 729,000 adults and 237,000 children used a naturopathic treatment in the previous year.<sup>1</sup> Naturopathic doctors also provide something else that patients want from their doctors: time.<sup>2</sup> NDs spend an average of thirty to sixty minutes with their patients, while the average MD may spend seven to fifteen minutes. NDs take time to listen, to understand their patients' concerns and goals, to educate and to create individualized treatment plans.

As a small medical profession, we are stepping up to address the steep rise of chronic diseases in this country that are often based on poor lifestyle choices, including diet. In fact, naturopathic medicine has the potential to fill two significant needs in the current American healthcare system: (1) the lack of access to primary care physicians; (2) insufficient nutrition education provided to conventional medical doctors, preventing them from including appropriate, individualized dietary counseling at each visit.

Within the conventional medical model, a widespread lack of formal nutrition education and clinical application of food as medicine is a known barrier to success in reducing the rates of chronic disease.<sup>3</sup> Compared to conventional medical doctors, NDs are exceptionally well prepared to fill this skill and knowledge gap. NDs complete four required semesters of nutrition training in addition to studies in naturopathic philosophy, which builds a foundation to use food as medicine for mind, body, and spirit. During nutrition courses, NDs receive training in the history, biochemistry, benefits and challenges of prescribing specific diets, such as an anti-inflammatory, low-glycemic, gluten-free, dairy-free, Mediterranean, or vegetarian diet,

for example. Additionally, we are trained to utilize diagnostic tests to identify food allergies and food sensitivities and to assess functional digestive problems. Combining this training with extended time face to face with patients, NDs can routinely make a difference in empowering their patients to make dietary changes.

We know that poor dietary choices are one part of the problem of our current healthcare crisis. Food is medicine; therefore, food is part of the solution. It is time that we truly recognize this therapy and that we all learn how to use food as medicine everyday.

Julie Briley, ND  
Courtney Jackson, ND