

Healtheorium®

By Mimi Borger

"It all depends when it comes to questions about your health"

It amazes me how many people are willing to talk to a perfect stranger working in a "health" store, divulge deeply personal information, and then ask for and take advice (about their most important health matters) from a person of untold education or background. It reminds me of those commercials where following heroic medical deeds, the hero is asked something like, "Are you a doctor?" The hero answers, "No, but I did sleep at a Holiday inn last night."

Don't get me wrong, many of the people working in special "health" or "natural" departments are very knowledgeable; some are medical students, doctors, nurses, or mothers of eight; some are high-school graduates needing a job. Others are like me...we've been through the school of hard knocks, read volumes of information, consulted esteemed and sometimes famous doctors, and kept flexible in our view of medical information, realizing that all of what we know is just "healtheorium."

As consumers, many of us try to stay on top of medical news...but what is news and what is theory? Study after study provides an overwhelming amount of the newest medical information available. But, it seems that, as soon as a medical miracle is discovered, experience comes along and negates the miracle. And studies are, after all, just that – an attempt to discover facts through research or experiments. Some studies are large, while others are based only on a small number of subjects. Where they are published depends on specific rules (such as the number of professionals performing the study) and of course, the different journals that they are published in can provide medical clout or not. Some studies are too controversial and will never see the light of day, while others are possibly less worthy but backed by huge corporate interests. So, between the information available to us and our often modern but generic medical care, it's difficult to make up-to-date and realistic health decisions.

Turning to our doctors, many of us feel like cattle in line getting poked with a probe and sent on our way. Yet, genuine medical help usually stems from physicians who listen carefully to us as individuals, make educated guesses, and begin by suggesting basic tried and true remedies. There are many simple diagnostic standards and cures, although the answer to any medical question should begin with, "That depends." Should we take vitamins? Well, that depends. Should we perform an inner body cleanse? Well, that depends. Should we soak our feet in Epson salts? Again, that depends.

As a general rule, we should all seek the advice of professionals whose opinion we can call on: a trusted pharmacist; a doctor we feel free to talk with...one that treats us like an individual. Listening to the opinions of others, professional or not, we should always take into consideration our own physical restrictions, current medications, allergies and sensitivities before cautiously taking even the most simple of supplements and herbal treatments.

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