

## Nutrition Made Easy...Making Money With Nutrition 101

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There has been an exponential growth in the number of Americans who now take nutritional supplements. In fact, several studies have shown that over 60% of Americans consume nutritional products on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup> This trend indicates an increasing interest and awareness of the benefits of good nutrition and resources, as well as how they relate to health. Although the studies shed light on the number of people using supplements, they do not reveal the need for proper nutritional direction. This is an area that could benefit patient and practice; better health for the client, increased reputation and income for the practitioner. The emphasis of this article is to provide a professional guide to implementing nutritional supplements for a health care provider's practice.

Generally speaking, over 70% of those who take a nutrition supplement do not inform their medical doctors.<sup>2</sup> This omission is often because patients are intimidated by their physicians and the medical profession in general. There appears to be an underlying fear of being ostracized from departing with the mainstream of allopathic medicine and relying on nutrition rather than medication.

However, the statistics also show an increasing concern by patients about their health. The patients are more resourceful at looking for and using nutritional supplements rather than prescription drugs. A primary reason for this shift is the reality and increasing disclosure of harmful, even deadly, side effects of prescription medications.

Consumers are now looking for nutritional direction from their alternative health care provider. The unique bond that exists between patient and doctor allows the client to rely on him/her to sort through the massive amounts of information to come up with a viable health plan using health supplements.

Still, some health care providers would rather than offering and supplying their clients with the best supplements, simply recommend they go out and find a particular formula themselves. Typically this results in a less-than-optimal choice by the patient; usually inexpensive, OTC products with questionable ingredients that may or may not be in line with what was recommended. Additionally, patients may seek the advice of the store salesman, whose objective is to increase revenue rather than provide the best advice. This approach can wind up with the patient taking an inferior or even incorrect product. This situation can be avoided by providing patients with specific supplements and dosage recommendations while in your office, or better yet, prescribing and offering nutritional supplements yourself.

The primary purpose for including nutrition into a health care provider's practice is to enhance patient health and improve treatment results. Guidance in assisting patients with the right supplement for the right health situation is invaluable. This is important to ensure that patients receive the correct nutrition, take proper dosages, and avoid any harmful contraindications, as well as to be sure the patient has received a quality product. The health care provider is then left in the position to determine the best product or products to recommend.

Most health care providers are already aware that there is an enormous difference among nutritional supplements, with quality being the most important. As alternative health care providers, we should not fall into the trap of the medical doctor/pharmaceutical relationship that forms a business alliance to the detriment of the patient. Even in alternative care, practitioners sometimes select products and companies solely on price or "perks" and may even assume that their supplements are of equal or comparable quality. When deciding on a health product line, it is vital that a provider find a company that offers exceptional processing, the finest ingredients,

and presents proper applications backed by objective clinical studies.

Another factor to consider when selecting a nutritional company is what resources a company has to support your practice. Does your nutrition provider have a scientific/technical support person available to answer your questions? Does it have product information to educate you and your patients?

Following is a brief list of helpful tips to assist in successful nutritional supplementation in your practice.

- Use dosage and timing protocols that are simple.
- Patient education is key to compliance. Make sure the patients know that, rather than covering up symptoms, you are addressing the cause and that positive results can take time.
- Make sure the patient is aware of any possible detoxification symptoms — handle it before it occurs. You will look much better in the eyes of your patients.
- The supplement company should be able to assist both the doctor and the staff with training and how to respond to questions.
- Make it easy for patients to order supplements from you on a regular basis.

Most patients can benefit from a basic nutritional protocol that addresses widely-accepted nutritional deficiencies related to the standard American diet. The basic premise of holistic medicine is to treat the body as a whole. This is an approach that is being utilized by more health care providers and is a broad-spectrum consideration — one that covers a larger number of potential solutions using a multi-vitamin or multi-nutrient supplements to help with patient symptoms. Health care providers and patients alike can benefit most by establishing a baseline approach such as this.

Once the patient has been supplied with and begins using a good complete multi-vitamin supplement, numerous nutritional deficiencies can be met and it will be much easier for both patient and practitioner to narrow any remaining needs. At this point, any lingering symptoms can be targeted saving both time and money.

When making the choice of the best nutritional supplements, it is wise to avoid synthetic chemical ingredients, preservatives, binders, coatings, excipients, and flow agents as much as possible to acquire the best possible nutrition. Look for organically-complexed (carbon bound), comprehensive supplements derived from whole foods, minimally processed and made from the highest quality ingredients.

Incorporating this type of complete nutrition into your practice will not only provide additional revenue, but has the benefit of increased patient health, and professionalism. Addressing your patients overall health through the integration of nutritional therapies is the very foundation of preventative health care. This leads to happy, satisfied patients who are a strong source of referrals and growth within your practice.

Nutritional therapies are long-term solutions to address and correct numerous health problems caused by deficiencies. Most of your patients will continue buying and taking supplements. It makes sense that they buy only the best and most effective ones from their health care provider!

1 Consumer Use of Dietary Supplement. Prevention Magazine. 2000:1-39

2 Eisenberg DM, Davis RB, Ettner SL, et al. Trends in alternative medicine use in the United States, 1990-1997—results of a follow-up survey. JAMA 1998 280:1560-1573.

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