From the Desk of
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There's a Better Solution to Pain than Ibuprofen…

An informed consumer is the best consumer. You want to be out of pain, I want you to be out of pain…but at what price? Understanding the process of trauma, pain and inflammation will give you real choices in your healing and, more importantly, in your health.

Inflammation is actually the process of protection and repair. So we really don't want to eliminate it, we want it to pick up its pace through efficient and refined use of the body's resources. So let's look at how the body handles the various sources of pain.

Acute Injury- An injury, such as a strain, strain or contusion, is a localized area of damaged tissue in your body. The damaged cells release chemicals that signal the body's need to send its various sources to basically digest and remove these damaged cells, to activate your immune system locally to prevent infection and to begin repair by laying down a new tissue matrix in as little as 4 hours! Sounds like a decent plan wouldn't you agree? Do we really want to interfere with this process?

Infection- Foreign entities enter your body and one of your body's sentinels in the immune system spots them and sends out an alert. Your body speeds up metabolism systemically (a fever) to make it an uninviting environment for the invaders, your white blood cells activate to contain and eliminate, and your body gets stiff and achy from the resulting clean-up process. This also sounds like an effective plan!

Chronic Injury- Repetitive motion in daily living challenges your body's innate design, leaving you prone to injury that develops over time from overuse. Think of the guidelines for healthy workouts and muscle building. Generally, a muscle group is given 48 hours off in between major workouts for 'recovery time'; the amount of time it takes for the metabolic processes of tissue clean up, repair and rebuilding. In the day-to-day scenario of repetitive motion, toxins from muscle processes can't get cleared out fast enough. The body never gets to finish the cycle and so inflammation never ends, creating the chronic injury scenario.

Know what you are putting into your body and why.

In this millennium of 'instant messaging' and 'media streaming', I understand the tug-of-war between caring for your body and having to function. The fact that a sprain/strain takes at least 4-6 weeks of healing in the healthy individual is an eternity to each of us. The key, as in all things, is moderation and balance. **Know what you're asking your body to do, know what you're putting into your body and why, and finally, know the possible results of your choices.** As your doctor and your guide, I will help you make the most informed choices. Using a multi-path approach will give you the most effective healing and recovery time.

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Common Sources of Pain Relief

Product	Action	Unwanted Side Effects
Aspirin	Anti-inflammatory, anti-pyretic (fever) that enters blood stream, searches out prostaglandins (inflammatory agents) and binds to them to de-activate.	**Heartburn, nausea, stomach upset, gastrointestinal bleeding, confusion, diarrhea, dizziness, drowsiness, hearing loss, ringing in ears, severe or persistent stomach pain, vomiting and, for some, severe allergic reactions**
NSAIDS Ibuprofen, Naproxen Aleve	Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents that inhibit the cox enzyme needed for the inflammatory cascade. This not only disables the pain component of the inflammatory process, it inhibits the components of the process responsible for preventing infection and rebuilding of tissue, crucial for healing.	**While I view the healing inhibition to be their most damaging effects, review the list of other unwanted effects: Edema, fluid retention, dizziness, headache, nervousness, rash, ear ringing, nausea, heartburn, abdominal cramps or pain, indigestion, vomiting, vitamin C and sulphate depletion, and an estimated annual death rate of 16,500 people in the US alone**!
Acetaminophen	An antipyretic and an analgesic, however not an anti-inflammatory. It reduces your ability to sense pain and it reduces fever by direct interference with your body's hypothalamic heat-regulating center.	**Hemolytic anemia, leucopenia, neutropenia, thrombocytopenia, liver damage.**

But There Is a Better Way

Enzyme Therapy and Diet- Proteolytic enzymes and natural metabolism-accelerating foods enhance the body's own healing process and reduce the negative effects of the inflammatory cascade without disrupting this innate process so crucial to healing. Enzyme therapy:

*Inhibits pain-causing irritants and therefore **reduces pain.**

*Reduces thickness of extracellular fluid and therefore **reduces swelling.**

*Inhibition and **reduction of bruising** through fibrin control.

*Improvement in the blood supply, increasing healing of wound and **reduction of scarring**.

*Increased molecular debridement and clean up in area of concern **reducing swelling**.

*Breaks down and clears platelet aggregation **accelerating wound healing**.

It is used by Olympic teams, the NFL, national Soccer teams and universities because of its accelerated healing times: i.e. returning to training after a strain in 9.4 days vs. 15.9 days.

It has also been used pre- and post- meniscus surgery improving recovery time- 7 days for 90 degree knee flexion vs. 9 days; and 17 days for swelling reduction vs. 24 days.

Your Diet – There are dietary shifts you can make that also contribute to your quality of healing.

***EFA Balance**-There are 3 Essential Fatty Acid (EFA) components to the inflammatory cascade that, together, signal a need for caution (pain), activate the immune system to prevent and/or fight infection, and repair and rebuild tissue. These three pathways are competitive in nature. Your body decides which one to use by looking at the quantity of each and choosing the most abundant. As you can probably already guess, the typical American diet favors the highest concentration of Arachidonic Acid, the prominent pain producing pathway, i.e. (red meats, fats, peanuts, process foods, alcohol, coffee, black tea.) So, of three possible pathways, Americans are generally getting more pain production than tissue healing or immune protection. By shifting your diet to promote the EPA pathway and/or the GLA pathway, you alter the body's ability to promote healing and reduce pain. These would be fish oils, flax oils, seed and sprouts.

***Anti-oxidants**-Acting upon the enzyme pathways, they slow down the rate of 'oxidative stress' associated with the inflammatory process. These are foods like Vitamin C, Vitamin E, garlic.

***Anti-inflammatory foods**-Foods in our diet essentially work to help promote healing and health in your body or cause irritation and inflammation. Some well known anti-inflammatory foods are ginger, pineapple, blueberries, garlic, salmon, avocado and cayenne pepper, and tumeric.

Therapeutic Laser-Therapeutic Laser is an FDA cleared procedure. Over 2000 studies, including a GM study on carpal tunnel, have proven the success of therapeutic lasers in the healing of musculo-skeletal conditions. Focused light stimulates cellular activity to:

*__Reduce swelling and bruising__

*__Reduce tissue damage__

*Stimulate fibroblast activity __speeding up recovery time__

*Increase vascular activity __promoting improved circulation__

*Increase metabolic activity promoting __a more effective immune response__

*Stimulate nerve cell activity for __improved nerve and tissue function.__

Using the multi-pronged approach, a combination of therapeutic agents, diet and the appropriate exercise routine, you will create the highest quality healing and reduce the length of your recovery.

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