

Aging Lifestyles: Even some doctors back chiropractors

by Joe_Volz

We're reminded of how much medical care has changed for the better every time we visit our chiropractor, Steven Digles, in Frederick, Md.

What a contrast with 60 years ago. Then, nothing would have gotten us to visit chiropractors. The medical profession maintained that chiropractors were almost frauds, making people feel better for a while but without the knowledge "real" doctors had that might cure them.

Don was in medical school in Chicago in the 1950s and he bought the American Medical Association line. He and other medical students scorned any medical practitioner who hadn't graduated from AMA-approved medical schools.

Echoing his fellow students, Don used to scornfully dismiss the other medical practitioners with, "They aren't doctors. They're nothing but quacks."

Has that opinion ever changed today! Along with many other revolutions in medical care, many M.D.s have come to respect the talents of chiropractors and other practitioners of alternative medicine.

Some, such as Dick, a pain management doctor, recommend to patients that they go to chiropractors if he thinks it will help manage their aches.

Today, physicians realize that some alternative medicines and techniques can help people, as long as the alternate practitioners "walk the line" (as Johnny Cash sang so memorably) and don't accept patients who need medicines that only physicians can prescribe.

Not so long ago, no medical insurance would pay for alternative treatment either. Today, Medicare and our medical benefits from our company's pension plan picks up most costs for the initial treatment course and some of the aftercare.

We've benefited from our chiropractor. Through his treatments, a chronically aching back and a dislocated rotor cuff have greatly improved how, we feel. The traditional doctors had only two choices - load us up with numbing pain medication or try surgery - which might work.

An extra bonus is that going to Digles' office is fun - from the friendly assistants who amuse us with their jokes to the framed picture on the waiting room wall.

The picture features two checks to the doctor, allegedly from an insurance company, showing the results of Medicare reform. The first - pre-reform - shows a check for 12 cents; the second has a similar check - post-reform - with \$0.00 on it.

Clients, once Digles gets the manipulation part over with, enjoy the therapy, too. It's relaxing to get our backs massaged on a water bed and then while seated in a comfortable leather recliner.

A dose of humor, which Digles has aplenty, makes his brand of "medicine" palatable.

He is testimony that Julie Andrews was correct in saying to her two unruly charges that a "spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down."

Andrews starred in the classic movie for children, "Mary Poppins," several decades ago. Its enduring charm for both children and adults has brought the story of the governess back once again to Broadway.

Adults exercise to keep their bodies in shape, keep their weight within reasonable limits or to reduce stress. Some exercise alone, and may come to hate it. Others look for ways to make exercising enjoyable.

Judging from our experience as well as our thrice-weekly water volleyball games at the YMCA, having fun is the key to making exercise palatable over the long run.

We joined the Y because our doctor told us we needed to get exercise if we wanted to remain limber; we stay because it's enjoyable. We always miss our volleyball colleagues when we have to miss a session. The secret, then, to combining pleasure and exercise is to find a group or companion to exercise with. This turns a chore into a pleasure. Exercise companions also keep us connected to one another, not isolated in own homes and at work. So, since we need quite a bit of exercise, we go together on walks or find a neighbor or colleague to accompany us. At times, we take part in a 5-kilometer walk for charity. Seeing many people of all ages doing the same thing is a tonic to grumpy spirits and helps keep those pounds off.

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