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Understanding Retracing And Healing Reactions

Introduction

During the course of a nutritional balancing program, at times a person may feel worse or experience an aggravation of symptoms. Such experiences can cause fear or panic. One may even abandon the health program if one doesn't understand what is occurring. This is unfortunate, because such reactions are often prime indicators of improvement.

These reactions are called, retracing, healing crises, flare ups and healing reactions. The terms are used interchangeably in this article. Such reactions occur during the course of many types of natural therapies. We will confine our discussion to reactions that occur due to a mineral balancing program. However, the principles can be applied to many other therapies. Understanding Healing React

Understanding Healing Reactions is Important for Several Reasons:

- *Understanding removes fear.* It is best to look forward to healing reactions, realizing they are a sign of progress. If one understands the reactions, recovery is facilitated.
- *Understanding can often mean the difference between abandoning or continuing a health program.*
- *It is important to distinguish a healing crisis from a disease crisis.* Not all reactions are favorable. If a person isn't following the nutrition program, or if the program isn't designed correctly, one may be getting worse, not better.
- *At times action is needed.* Simple measures can often reduce symptoms, avoid complications and hasten recovery. Other actions, especially suppression with medication, may be harmful. Healing reactions are not well understood by the majority of medical doctors because they rarely occur with medical therapy. Therefore, misunderstandings can easily occur. The use of medical drugs can have detrimental side effects that can at least prolong healing reactions and perhaps cause complications.

For all of these reasons, understanding healing reactions is of critical importance.

Why Healing Reactions Occur

Reactions occur due to a series of events. We can describe this sequence in three steps. The first step is supplying a missing ingredient or removing a

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blockage. The second step is the activation of the body's own healing and balancing mechanisms. The third step is the production of symptoms or the manifestation of the reaction.

Step 1. Supplying a Missing Factor or Removing a Blockage

Supplying a Missing Factor. An individualized, scientific nutrition program provides vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, or other substances that are of value in balancing body chemistry and improving body function.

A nutrition counselor or practitioner can offer explanations and counseling that provides other factors that assist healing. Taking time with people and offering hope and understanding of a problem are also valuable healing factors.

Removing Blockages. Nutritional balancing may be expressed negatively as the removal of factors that impair health. Various factors can block natural physiological functioning. Toxic metals may replace vital metals in enzymes binding sites. Nutritional deficiencies block normal enzymatic reactions in the body's energy cycles. Chemicals in our food and our drinking water, such as fluoride, chlorine and other elements, also block normal biochemical reactions.

Depending on one's particular body chemistry and metabolic rate, certain foods may act as blockers. For example, phytates commonly found in food grains reduce the absorption of calcium, magnesium and zinc. The elimination of a food or foods may be more important than recommending a specific food.

Vitamins may even act as blockers by imbalancing body chemistry. In a slow oxidizer, for example, excessive choline and inositol may be detrimental because they further slow the oxidation rate and reduce the body's energy efficiency. Bacteria or yeast organisms may have to be eliminated to allow healing. Emotional blockages, such as fear, may have to be reduced through counseling before a person will achieve optimal results. The removal of blockages and the supplying of missing nutrient factors is the first step towards producing a healing crisis or a retracing.

Step 2. Activation of the Body's Own Healing Energy

The second step is a direct result of removing blockages or supplying a missing factor. In the natural healing arts, we presume that the body possesses a natural regenerative power. Removing blockages frees some of that regenerative power. Energy levels consequently increase. This is step two.

Step 3. Production of Symptoms of Healing

Step three is the result of step two. As a result of enhancing or activating the body's energy production, changes in body chemistry begin to occur. These changes take many forms that will be detailed in the next section. Very briefly, they include:

- elimination of toxins
- re-building of tissue
- re-balancing of the endocrine glands
- resolution of chronic illnesses.

The changes above may result in certain symptoms. Various symptoms result from the mobilization of toxic substances from storage and consequent adjustments in body chemistry. In effect, a house cleaning effort is in progress. Like lifting up a rug, the exposed dirt must be swept out. Structure and functioning have to be restored along new healthier lines. Toxic substances are cast out and brick by brick a new structure or new chemical body is built.

On an emotional level, the same phenomena occur. Unwholesome attitudes and emotions which are not compatible with a healthy body have to be cast out

and replaced with more appropriate attitudes. This too represents a major adjustment. Again a housecleaning process occurs on a mental and emotional level. Thoughts and memories are often brought into consciousness to be evaluated and released.

Symptoms And Signs Of Retracing And Healing Reactions

The signs and symptoms of retracing and healing reactions are extremely variable. Almost any symptom imaginable can arise. Let us classify the symptoms of retracing in three categories:

1. The re-appearance of old symptoms
2. The aggravation of present symptoms
3. The appearance of new symptoms

- **Reappearance of old symptoms.** Joint pain that had subsided years ago may flare up. Pain at an old injury site or old wound may return. A temporary reactivation of an old infection may occur. Thoughts or feelings from a past event that a person does not even remember may return. These are examples of the reappearance of old or previous symptoms.
- **The aggravation of present symptoms.** A sore throat or joint pain may temporarily become worse. If a person has a tendency towards depression, he or she may become temporarily more depressed. A skin rash may become more acute. Any present symptom may be aggravated. Anxiety may increase for several days and then diminish.

Completion reactions. Both the appearance of old symptoms and aggravation of present symptoms represent a phenomenon referred to as completion. The body fully and completely handles a condition which it was previously unable to resolve. Once the condition has been handled, the symptoms pass.

The following is an example of completion. A patient had a severe case of intestinal flu, with diarrhea, vomiting and a high fever. After one week, these symptoms passed. However, digestion was poor, indicating that the healing process was incomplete. The person went on a nutrition program and one month later all the previous symptoms returned. The symptoms only lasted a single day and then vanished. Digestion returned to normal and no symptoms remained.

Completion is one of the key aspects of the retracing process. It is discussed at greater length in the section on emotional retracing.

- **The appearance of new symptoms.** The third type of healing reaction is the appearance of new symptoms. One important cause for new symptoms is the rapid elimination of toxic substances that have built up over a long period of time. A second cause for new symptoms is a change in body chemistry called decompensation.

Reactions Due To The Elimination Of Toxic Substances.

Over the years, the body becomes nutritionally depleted and often accumulates toxic substances due to nutritional deficiencies, inadequate elimination, exposure to environmental toxins, or a sluggish rate of metabolism. When the body's energy output is diminished, the elimination of waste products, metabolic end-products and/or environmental toxins are retained. Ordinarily, one does not realize this is occurring because it happens so slowly. One notices an acute poisoning, but not the slow daily accumulation of toxic substances.

A health-building program can cause a sharp rise in energy levels. This in turn results in a rapid elimination of stored toxins. The process can cause both physiological and psychological symptoms including, rashes, headaches, upset

stomach, a metallic taste and nausea. The following are some of the symptoms one may experience from the elimination of toxic metals.

Symptoms of Copper Detoxification

Many symptoms can occur when excess copper is eliminated from the tissues. One may experience headaches, usually of the migraine type. Extreme fatigue, acne, skin eruptions on the head, chest and thighs, free floating anxiety feelings, spaciness, fears and disorientation may occur.

Changes in the menstrual period are common, including irregular periods, cramps and symptoms of premenstrual tension. Men may experience testicular pain. The elimination of copper can also cause joint pains. Nausea, digestive disturbances, anorexia and discomfort in the area of the liver may also occur during copper elimination.

Symptoms of Cadmium Detoxification

The elimination of cadmium may give rise to pain in the kidney area, joint pain, extreme fatigue, a metallic taste in the mouth, temporary changes in blood pressure, digestive disturbances and anxiety.

Symptoms of Nickel Detoxification

The elimination of nickel from tissue storage can lead to pain in the kidney area, fatigue and symptoms related to the lungs, where nickel is commonly stored.

Symptoms of Mercury Detoxification

Mercury elimination may result in emotional changes, a metallic taste in the mouth, pain in the kidney area, fatigue and occasionally skin eruptions. Mercury toxicity is associated with copper toxicity, as mercury is eliminated, copper elimination symptoms commonly occur.

A hair mineral analysis can help detect which toxic metals are being eliminated or will be eliminated during a healing reaction. This helps predict some of the symptoms that will occur. It is helpful to advise individuals that they may experience certain symptoms when they begin a nutrition program.

Indirect Effects of Toxic Metal Elimination

In addition to specific symptoms due to each toxic metal, indirect effects of the elimination of toxic metals occur. Some of the common ones are: intensification of fears, hot flashes, shortness of breath, numbness, diminished body temperature, dizziness, flu, colds, sore throat, sinus drainage and muscular aches and pains. It is virtually impossible to predict all the possible symptoms.

In addition to toxic metals, other toxic during healing reactions. Medications used in the past are a common example. To understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to understand that when a drug medication is administered, not all the medication is eliminated from the body. Although the therapeutic effect wears off after several hours, this only indicates that the blood level required for a therapeutic response is no longer present.

A residue of past medications is often released quickly while on a nutritional balancing program. The medications may have been taken at any time, even years before. Medications may have even been acquired in utero from a parent. As one's energy level and adrenal gland activity improve, stored medications are released. In fact, any factor or stressor that increases the metabolic rate can trigger an elimination of this type. This accounts for the flashbacks one can have with LSD and other drugs.

When a medication is released, a person may experience symptoms associated with that drug. For example, antihistamine release may cause fatigue

and dryness of the throat. Caffeine release may cause nervousness or irritability as the caffeine is released back into the blood stream to be eliminated. In addition to toxic metals and drugs, other toxins may be eliminated. These include metabolic end-products or waste products of metabolism which may cause foul odors and bad breath. Pockets of bacteria that have been encapsulated for years may be released. Industrial chemicals that were inhaled or that one was exposed to many years ago may be eliminated.

One should be prepared for almost anything. There is no way to tell which toxic substances or how much is inside a person, although the case history and hair analysis are helpful. Most reactions are minor in nature and pass quickly. Occasionally, a reaction is quite vigorous and requires considerable support. Support is the key because these reactions usually cannot and should not, be suppressed.

Toxic Metal Elimination

One surprising aspect of healing reactions is the large amount of toxic metals that may be stored. Some patients continue to undergo healing crises for years. Repeat hair mineral analyses confirm the continued elimination of toxic metals.

Many people are under the false impression that only a few months are required to eliminate all their toxins and heavy metals. Even more ridiculous are suggestions that by fasting for thirty days or so, one can eliminate all noxious substances. It just doesn't work that way. Detoxification is often a slow process, because the body can only eliminate a certain amount of toxic substances at any given time.

Decompensation Or Rebalancing Reactions

A second and more complicated cause for the symptoms of healing reactions may be called decompensation reactions or rebalancing reactions. These are reactions that occur as the body shifts quickly from one homeostatic state to another as a result of a correctional health program.

The sequence of events is as follows: As nutritional deficiencies mount and as toxic metals and other toxins accumulate slowly in the body, the glands and organs adapt to the depleted state of nutrition as best they can. Certain endocrine glands may become overactive, others become sluggish. The endocrine glands compensate for each other to offset or cope optimally. One manifestation of this is a change in the oxidation rate. A person may be aware of these changes. He or she may feel older or suffer from an energy loss. However, they fail to understand that the entire body is going through an adaptation process.

When a mineral balancing program is instituted, nutritional stress is often relieved very quickly. For example, a simple change in diet may relieve excessive strain on the pancreas if a person has been eating excessive sugar. When stress is reduced, the body begins to re-adjust, re-adapt and re-balance. It moves back toward the state it was in years previously. This is called decompensation.

Previously the body was compensating. All of a sudden it no longer has to compensate. The change may occur quickly. The disease process happened slowly, with slow change in all the glands. Now we may suddenly provide support to the adrenal glands or the liver. The result is often an uneven correction.

The adrenal glands may recover first and the thyroid gland may recover later. Kidney function may improve dramatically for the first few months and then some other organ is affected. This process of uneven and rapid adjustment may cause unpleasant reactions. All of a sudden one may not feel hungry for a few days, or there may be an increased desire for food. One may need more sleep,

or be unable to sleep for a few days. Mood swings may occur. Physical symptoms may occur as one passes back through old mineral patterns, or into new patterns that have never been experienced.

Numerous changes may be noted and some may cause alarm. Skin eruptions may occur temporarily. Rebalancing is quite a complex process. However, these reactions are normal. With reassurance and understanding, the reactions subside.

An Example of Decompensation

One particular type of decompensation that can be disturbing to the patient and to the practitioner occurs if a person is a slow oxidizer with excessive cadmium poisoning. This is a common situation. When a person with this pattern begins a mineral balancing program, the first symptom is usually an improvement because the oxidation rate increases. However, soon cadmium begins to be eliminated. One is then going to feel tired. Often, more tired than previously. This occurs because cadmium has an aldosterone-like effect, it raises one's sodium level. As cadmium is eliminated, the sodium level drops, resulting in a slowing of the oxidation rate.

The resulting fatigue produces a temptation to stop the nutrition program. But in fact, the solution is to remain on the program and increase the oxidation rate again. The patient will feel better in a week or so. Rest is also indicated to assist healing. With rest the oxidation rate becomes balanced again, energy levels increase and as a consequence, the body begins eliminating more cadmium. This in turn slows down the oxidation rate and the person feels tired again, often even worse than when he began his nutritional balancing program. Again, the only solution to this problem is to go back on the program to continue the correction process. So it goes - like being on a roller coaster until all the cadmium is eliminated. Then a permanent feeling of well-being will occur. This is an example of one type of toxic metal elimination and rebalancing process. By understanding the process, the mystery of it can be explained.

How To Distinguish A Healing Crisis From A Disease Crisis

When a healing reaction occurs, patients often ask, "Am I getting better or am I getting worse?" This is a legitimate question! It is possible that the person is not getting better.

Several questions can help one discern a healing from a disease crisis.

- **Is the patient following a nutritional balancing program?** Joint pain that had subsided years ago may flare up. Pain at an old injury site or old wound may return. A temporary reactivation of an old infection may occur. Thoughts or feelings from a past event that a person does not even remember may return. These are examples of the reappearance of old or previous symptoms.
- **Is the patient following a healthy life style?** If so, it is more likely a healing crisis. Proper lifestyle includes getting enough rest, eating correctly, not placing oneself under extreme stress, emotional control, etc. Healing reactions can occur on vacations, when one's lifestyle is more healthful.
- **Was the client feeling better before the crisis occurred?** If so, the likelihood is greater that it is a healing reaction. Healing crises generally occur when one is feeling better or more energetic. The reason is that energy is required for a healing reaction to occur. As energy reserves increase, a feeling of well-being follows. When energy levels are high enough, the reaction occurs.

Emotional Healing Reactions And Emotional Retracing

Emotional reactions and retracing involve the same principle as physical reactions. However, they are less often expected. Most people can cope with a cold, a sore throat or a rash and they understand that these happen on the

nutritional correction programs. However, many do not understand why they should suddenly feel depressed, afraid or angry while they are on a nutrition program. Here are some specific mechanisms and principles of these reactions.

Association Of Memories With Biochemical Patterns

The first factor that can cause emotional reactions is the association of memories with mineral patterns. It is well known that thoughts and memories may be triggered by such things as odors, music, or specific locations that remind the person of something from the past. What is less well known is that memories can also be associated with specific biochemical patterns. As we rebuild and rebalance the body chemistry a person may pass through a mineral pattern of 20 years ago. Suddenly, thoughts or feelings from that time can flood into consciousness.

The change in body chemistry unlocks, releasing feelings that were dormant or subconscious. To suddenly experience these feelings can be frightening inasmuch as they can occur out of the blue, when one thought they had finished with or forgotten a particular situation or emotion.

Emotional Completion

The second reason for emotional healing reactions is the completion concept. Many times a person does not have the energy to deal thoroughly and completely with emotional situations or traumas. Lack of completion occurs because at the time of the trauma one's energy was not sufficiently high enough to completely handle the situation. A normal response may have been aborted for a variety of reasons. A trauma may go back to childhood when a person was not allowed to experience all the associated feelings. Or it was not appropriate for a child to express certain feelings about his parents or about his teachers. These uncompleted, unfinished episodes are lying dormant. As an individual's energy level increases as a result of following a health program, one may suddenly be able to complete these emotional experiences.

Several examples may be helpful. One patient complained only of tiredness, but he appeared to be agitated and irritable. A week later he was completely changed, he was calm and peaceful. Obviously what had occurred was that he had obtained the energy necessary to express certain feelings, in this case anger and rage, which he had not been able to express before. Once the feelings were expressed, he became calm and quiet.

A more frequent type of emotional reaction occurs with people who have a tendency to mental depression. One may notice on the hair analysis the person has a depression pattern. A very slow oxidation rate is one common depression pattern. Ask the person, "Do you feel very tired and depressed?" The client may say, "No, not really." After several weeks on the program, all of sudden he or she will feel extreme depression and sadness. It is often shocking. One thinks the vitamins and minerals have made them depressed. They don't understand what is going on.

The explanation is as follows: It requires energy to feel depression, sadness, or any other emotion fully. Until a person has sufficient energy, they won't feel it. They simply will block it out and not deal with it. On the nutrition program, one attains or acquires the energy to feel. Sometimes for the first time, one really feels bad, lonely or depressed. This is quite a shock. People tell us they have never felt this bad. It is strange to think that giving a person energy causes them to feel sadness, but that is exactly what happens. The solution is to stay with the program and the feelings will pass. That is, the client will complete the experience. He or she will feel the feelings, cry or whatever needs to happen and then will be all right. It is similar to a small child who, when hurt, cries and screams for a few minutes. When it is over, the child is happy again. That is the process of completion.

Awareness and Emotional Reactions

Improvement in health and energy levels causes an increase in awareness of one's environment. This may be pleasant, but it can also bring unhappy realizations about one's environment, friends, living situations, employment, etc. To have these realizations during a nutrition program is not at all unusual. This can cause difficulties in relationships and have an upsetting effect on the status quo. One may realize that one settled for a certain situation because no other options seemed possible, or because one's energy level was so low that no other option seemed workable. As awareness and energy improve, one's job or living situation often is viewed differently and more options seem possible.

Handling Healing Reactions

Reassurance is the most important action needed to assist a client with a healing reaction. Most reactions will take their course and resolve by themselves. Extra rest is helpful. At times the regular supplement program can be discontinued for a day or two until the reaction passes. The program should not be discontinued, however, if one is a slow oxidizer and the supplement program is helping to provide energy.

Chronic infections that become acute in a healing process can cause annoying symptoms, such as a sore throat or a bladder infection. Extra vitamin A, vitamin C, zinc, copper, manganese and herbs such as echinacea and golden seal may be helpful to overcome the infectious process more rapidly.

For toxic metal eliminations, lecithin may be used to slow down reactions. The phosphorus in lecithin can slow the toxic metal elimination.

Copper elimination may be rendered less annoying by adding molybdenum and sulfur to the nutrition program. Cadmium elimination may be assisted by additional calcium and zinc. Supplemental selenium may be helpful for cadmium and mercury toxicity. Additional vitamin C may help the elimination of all the toxic metals, providing the vitamin C does not unbalance the body chemistry. A high dose of vitamin C may not be helpful for fast oxidizers, as it can create a copper deficiency. Up to 1000 mg is generally safe for everyone. Slow oxidizers can take much more.

Also helpful are any natural therapies that assist the eliminative organs - the skin, lungs, liver, kidneys and colon. Procedures that can help alleviate annoying elimination symptoms include: colonic irrigation, enemas, massage, steam baths or sauna and any other therapy that helps balance the body.

Conclusion

Healing reactions or retracing are a necessary and important part of the healing process. While not all clients will experience them, most will have reactions at some time. Helping clients to understand that retracing is a positive aspect of their health program and dispelling fear and worry is the key to assuring a successful outcome.

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