

By *Bobbie Barbrey, RPh, CCN*

My mission, and my passion, is to help my clients achieve their highest level of optimal health. Before I opened my pharmacy in 2001, I became a Certified Clinical Nutritionist so that I could be more effective in helping clients to be well and to stay healthy for their entire lives.

I balance this work with traditional pharmacy duties as the owner of Medicap Pharmacy in North Raleigh, a full-service retail pharmacy. Medicap offers more than most pharmacies as we also specialize in compounding, compression hosiery, and nutritional counseling.

It is refreshing today to see how educated many people are about health and the need for quality supplementation. But what I often find is that even with all the research that people do on their own, they still can benefit from the guidance of a trained professional. Many feel overwhelmed by the abundance of choices and conflicting information on the Internet and do not know where to start. We work with people on all stages of the health journey. We give each one a plan that is unique and appropriate for where they are on that journey.

VARIETY OF NEEDS

Medicap Pharmacy is a busy place and we are fortunate to have many customers come to us to have their prescriptions filled. In reflecting how our business has evolved over the years, I've found that our prescription customers typically fall into one of three groups. There are customers who are there just to have their prescription medications filled. We are always happy to see them and we have many programs to offer them to help them manage their health with prescription drugs.

We have a *Sync* program so all their prescriptions are filled on the same day each month—one trip to the pharmacy per month! People love that. We also offer a program called *Dispill* where we group their meds in easy to open, color-coded packages with all the morning meds together, their lunch meds, together and all their evening meds together. No more wondering if I took this med already or if it is time to take that one. Caregivers especially appreciate this service.

A second group of customers we see are those who have their prescriptions filled and who also express some interest in exploring different aspects of health and wellness. They may have questions that we are happy to answer. We let them know that we are always available for more in-depth counseling if they are interested.

There is a third group of people who focus on their health and support it with quality nutritional supplements. They may also be taking prescription medications, but they are interested in making additional health changes. They are seeking high quality longevity, and want to know what they need to do to obtain it.

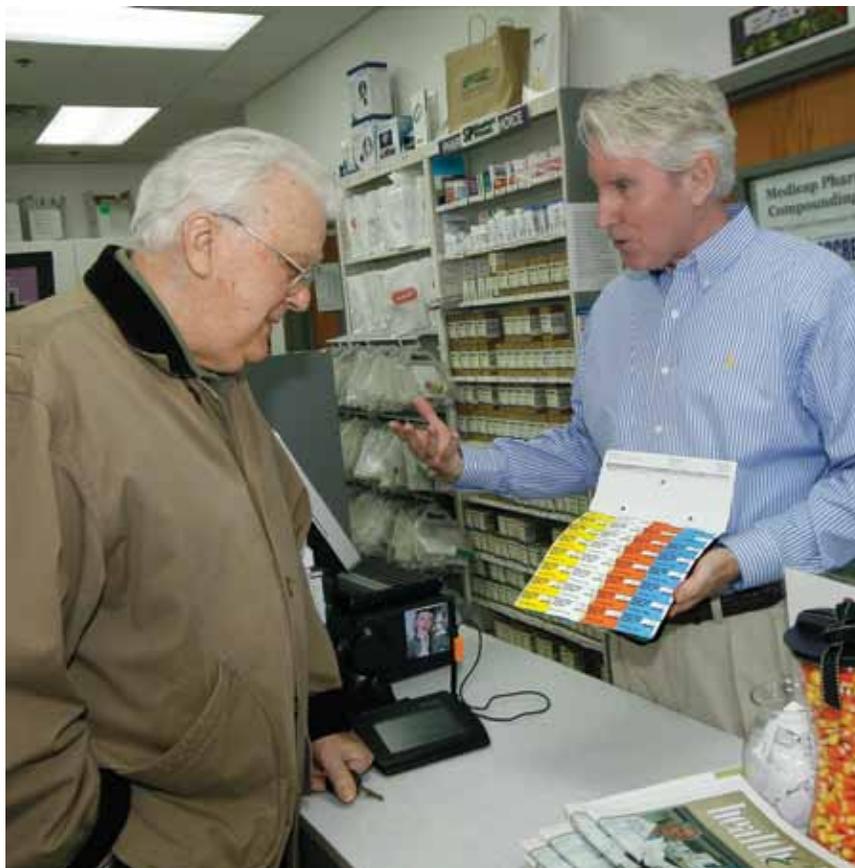
Engaging with this third group is where I am spending more and more of my time since it aligns with my passion for helping people achieve optimal health. After having been in this business for over 30 years, I've seen that it is usually not enough to rely solely on prescription medications when the goal is to become healthier over time. As I get to know my patients, I often will suggest other things they can do to improve their health. Need prescription drugs? By all means, take them! But also realize that they may just be managing symptoms. We may have to consider other options to truly get on the path of health and longevity!

We all need to be active participants in promoting and supporting our own good health, which is my goal for all of our clients.

ACTIVELY SEEKING HEALTH

Many of our patients understand that parts of their life and health have moved out of balance. Typically, they are using their medications properly, but they want guidance to

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Bobbie Barbrey, RPh, CCN, at right, explains to a customer the Dispill multi-dose packaging offered to Medicap Pharmacy clients, in which color-codes by time of day provide helpful reminders about when to take prescriptions.

Pursuing High-Quality Longevity

take the next step in improving their health. That's where I can help them the most. I help them develop a plan to move them forward toward better health, without relying on the trial and error method. No need to waste time trying a supplement that worked great for your hair stylist. Let's find what works for you. We accomplish that through many different mechanisms.

During a consultation, we will often use the Biomeridian Stress Assessment scanning device to help identify areas of inflammation in the body, and we then target those areas for support. We will use results from laboratory testing to help identify further support that is needed, review the patient's diet, and even review the prescription drugs to see if we can identify possible interactions that may need to be addressed with the client's primary physician.

I can order lab work for anyone who needs it and I frequently do lab reviews as a separate consultation for those who want an interpretation of their results. It's surprising how many people do not get an explanation that they can understand from their physician.

But even if you have had an interpretation of the labs

from your physician, I look at the results from a slightly different perspective. I look for trends based on a tighter lab range called a functional range. It is much easier to correct a problem before it reaches an out of range traditional lab result.

There may be some targeted supplements recommended as a result of this consultative work, but the good news is, they have been tested with your body so we know that it will be of benefit. Truthfully, our food just does not contain the nutrients that it used to and many of us have compromised digestive systems so extracting the nutrients that are there is suboptimal. The key is taking the supplements that are right for your body. That is why we have found these assessments to be so helpful.

Our nutrition customers can now shop for their supplements from the convenience of their home at our new eCommerce website, **Shop.MedicapRaleigh.com**. Use the coupon code WELCOME10HH to get 10 percent off your first order. This is our way of saying thank you and getting you started on a healthy 2016.

YOUR DIET

To produce the optimal results in health improvement, it is important to support it with a healthy diet. And what is that? While I generally recommend either the Mediterranean or the Paleo diets as excellent starting points, every client is unique. Everything we do is tailored to fit the uniqueness of the individual.

Recently, for example, I worked with a woman in her early forties, we'll call her Elizabeth. Her doctor had scared her about her health, which in this case was probably a good idea. Her blood sugar level was at 400—too high—and we started exploring parts of her life that were contributing to her present health condition.

Of chief concern, not surprisingly, was her diet. What she thought was healthy food was food that would convert directly to sugar—and that was impairing her efforts to reduce her blood sugar level on her own. Her doctor had prescribed a medication for her, but she didn't want to take it. We talked about the need for the medication and how we could begin to work from another direction while she gained the benefit of the medication. With the proper engagement on her part I can easily see the day when her doctor tells her that the medication is no longer needed.

Elizabeth was leading a stressful life, and stress eating was an important part of her poor-health equation. As we made some inroads into that issue, she began to see positive results. She told me the last time we met that she planned to live a long time, and she wanted to be fit and healthy for this journey.

How about you? Do you have a plan for your health in 2016? Are you sure that the supplements that you are taking are benefiting you? Call to set up an appointment for your own customized plan. It's one New Year's Resolution you'll be glad you kept. *h&h*

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