

Nutrition and Mental Health

By *Bobbie Barbrey, RPh, CCN*

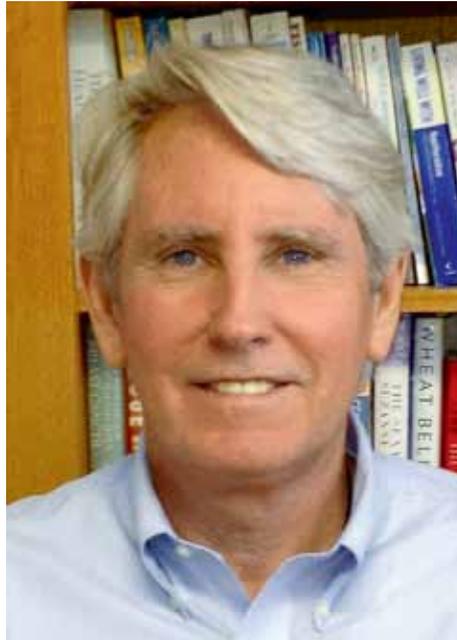
Most of us have busy lives that can be physically and mentally tiring. We move through our lives, faithfully meeting family, work, and social expectations whether we have the energy for it or not. Some of us are better equipped to do this than others but it is what we do.

Despite your best efforts, at some point, you may hit a wall: energy starts to drop, the quality of your sleep becomes erratic. You have more GI issues, your weight inches up, stress goes up along with the anxiety. The brain fog rolls in a little too often now, and along with this, your mood is off. Are you depressed?

My name is Bobbie Barbrey. As a pharmacist, certified clinical nutritionist, and owner of Medicap Pharmacy in North Raleigh, I have seen this pattern again and again. And I can help. I do nutritional consults with patients to help them navigate the sometimes unsteady path to health and wellness. It is my passion.

The symptom picture I described above has enabled the health care system to thrive over the years. This array of symptoms will usually result in a prescription for an antidepressant. I have seen it too often. I am respectful of every doctor's effort to help their patients to feel better. I also understand that there are appropriate uses of antidepressant medications. But, more and more, my patients have shared their concerns about how they felt on the medications and have asked if there were other options. This challenged me to learn more about the benefit and impact on their choices with lifestyle and diet and to dig deeper into the root cause of their symptoms. It became my mission: I wanted to become a patient advocate and guide them on the path to wellness. Let me give you an example.

Judy is a typical patient. She is 45 years old with two young children. She drove them



to after-school events, she worked part time, she did the laundry, she shopped and prepared meals for everyone, and her husband, while supportive, was also very busy and contributed little to the day-to-day demands. It's nice to think that we can be Superwoman and do it all, but the reality is we cannot. Her doctor suggested she take Zoloft as the solution to her frenzied life but she scheduled a consult with me for another opinion. If you stood in front of Judy would you see yourself?

What does this level of stress do to the body? The primary stress handling system is controlled by the adrenals. As they move out of balance, you will not sleep as well and that little roll around your midsection becomes more noticeable. Stress can also slow down the thyroid gland, leading to less energy, weight gain, and mild depression. Judy was cheating some with her diet that was causing more digestive or GI issues.

As a result of our consultation, we implemented a healthy eating program as the first phase of the healing process. Did you know that 70 percent of the serotonin in your body is formed around the tissue in the GI tract? Serotonin is the antidepressant neurotransmitter. I always start by supporting the GI tract. This always includes a look at the diet and I usually add an excellent nutraceutical. Simple, yet powerful.

Brain fog was a big concern for Judy. I explained to her that a healthy GI tract is the beginning of supporting a healthy brain. We did a saliva test to see if her adrenals were stressed. They were. I knew that supporting her adrenals would help her energy level and help clear her brain.

Energy is a concern with nearly every patient I see. Judy was no different. But how can you expect the body to create energy when you are not eating the foods that will provide vitamins and minerals needed to run your enzyme systems? And even if you do eat good foods, you have to be able to absorb them with a healthy GI tract. Sleep and adequate hydration are also essential pieces to the puzzle.

So how did Judy do? After implementing her custom health plan, she began to feel better in 30 days and at 90 days was a new vibrant person. She could have used the Zoloft Band-Aid and for a period of time some of her symptoms would have gone away. But it would not have addressed the cause of her problem. She realized that her participation in her lifestyle, diet, targeted nutrition, and a plan to make this happen were the keys to her health recovery.

Could this be the key to changing your health? Call and make an appointment. Let's make a difference. **hhl**

Bobbie Barbrey is the owner of Medicap Pharmacy in North Raleigh, a full-service retail pharmacy, which also offers compounding and nutritional counseling. To better serve his clients, Mr. Barbrey completed the program offered by the International and American Association of Clinical Nutritionists and became a Certified Clinical Nutritionist (CCN). Medicap Pharmacy is located at 6675-101 Falls of the Neuse Road, Raleigh, NC 27615. Contact at: Telephone: (919) 676-6161; FAX: (919) 676-6575; Medicap.Raleigh@gmail.com, and www.MedicapRaleigh.com.