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## Introduction to the Scope of Environmental Medicine

We are all familiar with the prevalent mode of treating medical problems: try medication to alleviate symptoms, and if it fails, try surgical intervention. The fact is this *is not* the best that medicine has to offer. Environmental Medicine provides a highly effective alternative to expensive and potentially problematic medications or surgeries.

Over the last 60 to 70 years, modern medicine has evolved into a constant pursuit of "cures" to apply to your ailments. These range from developing new medications to novel new surgical treatments, but the underlying theme is the same: the pharmaceuticals and hospitals are trying to sell you service after service. With the medical system so focused on this traditional approach, a highly effective approach to treatment has fallen by the wayside: identifying the *actual* underlying cause of your illness and desensitizing you to the elements causing your illness. Yes, if you break a bone or develop an imminently life threatening condition you may need medication or surgery. The fact is, however, many specialists have been placed patients on lifetime regimens of medications and surgeries to address their chronic conditions despite the existence of viable and even more effective alternatives.

If you want to get better and avoid symptom-masking medications and their related side effects, **our practice is for you**. Environmental Medicine adds another dimension to prescription-oriented medicine by utilizing biochemical and cause-oriented approaches to medicine.

### **So what exactly is the scope of Environmental Medicine?**

Consider each of the following conditions and the type of physician you would want to address each:

- Gall bladder disease: a surgeon or an allergist?
- Hypertension: a primary care physician, a cardiologist or an allergist?
- Obesity: a family practitioner or an allergist?
- Uterine fibroids: a gynecologist (the right answer) or an allergist (an allergist can play a role)?
- Fibrocystic breast: a gynecologist (right answer again) or an allergist (here too an allergist can play a role)?
- Cervical Dysplasia: a gynecologist or an allergist?
- Carpal tunnel syndrome: a surgeon or an allergist?
- Depression: a psychiatrist or an allergist?

In all of those cases you probably would not have selected an allergist. **What you need to know is that *all of these conditions are within the scope of Environmental Medicine***. Allergies are more than just coughing, sneezing and itching—they can be an underlying cause for many of these conditions.

## **How does Environmental Medicine address these conditions?**

- **Gall bladder disease:** In his book “Basics of Food Allergy”, James C. Breneman wrote, “100% of patients with gall bladder disease have food allergy.” We agree. Gall bladder attacks are often a response to food allergies. Using Environmental Medicine you can identify your food sensitivities, exclude them from your diet, and avoid surgery and hospitalization costs altogether
- **Hypertension:** Hypertension can be triggered by exposure to foods, chemicals, and heavy metals, or can be the result of hormonal problems like hypothyroidism and insulin toxicity or result from nutritional deficiencies of magnesium, calcium or Vitamin D. Hypertension is a classic example of a condition where multiple environmental, nutritional, and hormonal factors can contribute to a condition. Traditional treatment is to consume expensive and extremely powerful medications. You should at least try our approach before agreeing to consume medication for the remainder of your life
- **Obesity:** Weight gain is often linked to insulin toxicity, hypothyroidism, decline in sex hormones and food addiction. Food addiction is part of food allergy. Environmental Medicine can help uncover these causes
- **Uterine Fibroids or Fibrocystic Breast:** No, these are not allergic diseases. However the underlying causes for these can include female hormonal imbalance or insulin toxicity, and, in the case of fibrocystic breast, iodine deficiency and excessive caffeine consumption. Environmental Medicine can uncover these causes and may be able to prevent the need for surgical treatment
- **Cervical Dysplasia:** Cervical Dysplasia results from chronic vaginal inflammation generally from human papillomavirus (HPV). The condition is typically treated with Cryosurgery (freezing of the cervix) or cauterization (burning) or conization (surgical removal of a portion of the cervix). Environmental Medicine can address the underlying condition, chronic vaginal inflammation, using folic acid, vitamin E and essential fatty acids. If you can address the underlying cause you can avoid surgery!
- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:** This is a condition where inflammation around the wrist joint produces pain, numbness and tingling in hands and wrists and is typically treated with surgery. No, this is not an allergic condition, but the underlying inflammation can be addressed through magnesium and vitamin B6. This is another example of how our approach can be a more practical, more cost effective, less painful, and safer alternative to surgery.
- **Depression:** Depression is a serious condition for millions of people. Many psychological issues have underlying factors that cause biochemical imbalances. The fact is that some of these biochemical imbalances can be resolved through managing one’s environmental factors. Patients suffering from depression or other psychological problems may find that Environmental Medicine approach an effective alternative to the very powerful mood-altering medications prescribed by psychiatrists.

These are just a few common examples of how you can use Environmental Medicine and we hope this broadens your understanding of allergies and how they can affect your life. Our goal is to give you enough information to help you re-think how you approach your illnesses and those of your family and friends. At the end of this pamphlet you will find a list of several chronic ailments that can have environmental connections.

### **In summary:**

- Environmental Medicine deals with more than simple coughing, wheezing or itching. Environmental factors can affect any organ including the brain, heart, lungs, abdomen, female and male reproductive systems, muscles and joints
- Most common illnesses for which people contact their primary care physician and specialists of all sorts can be triggered by environmental, hormonal, nutritional and dietary factors
- The sooner you identify the environmental, hormonal, nutritional or dietary factors underlying your condition, the sooner you can be on your way to leading a productive, symptom-less and medication free life
- Addressing the underlying cause will not only help you feel better, if you're chronically ill it will save you considerable money over the long run

### **What is the role of the Environmental Allergist, how is he trained, and how can you benefit?**

Our role is to assess patients and investigate any and all potential underlying causes for a patient's chronic condition. To achieve this goal we are trained to investigate environmental factors like dust, molds, pollens, animal dander, foods, and chemicals encountered in daily life. We are also trained to understand and assess the functioning of your internal organ systems as well as your hormonal systems that can also be a cause for chronic conditions. We utilize biochemical and cause-oriented approaches to medicine.

Our patients benefit most from our care when they partner with us to tackle their health issues. Addressing the underlying cause sometimes requires desensitization to the offending substance, but in other cases may require avoidance. Our patients need to be fully committed to getting better and where avoidance is necessary must be willing to adjust their lifestyle accordingly.

### **When should you consider the environmental approach?**

- **For our current patients:** You should consult us for any basic chronic medical condition whether it is a cough, cold, flu, runny nose, wheezing, fever, stomachache, headache, back pain or anything else not immediately life threatening. If we cannot handle your illness we will refer you to an appropriate specialist. Allowing us to provide you with continuity of care allows us to care for you better by allowing us to take a more holistic view of your health. If you decide to go to another specialist for a condition, please let us know if they prescribe any medication so that we can take that into account in assessing your condition. Even if you need surgery like a hysterectomy, cholecystectomy, or tonsillectomy etc, it is still a good idea to at least let us know. Many times, two weeks of pre-operative and two weeks of post-operative nutritional support helps produce a better outcome and faster recovery.
- **For the friends and families of our current patients:** Consult us if you are ill or have a condition or symptoms that are recurring and not effectively controlled with medication. Chronic conditions take time to develop and just because you may not be as ill as our current patients, it doesn't mean we cannot help you. Our practice is a more comprehensive form of family practice than most and, having treated patients in the metropolitan St. Louis-area since 1979, we've taken care of many families. There is no need to wait until you are "sick enough" to see us. Visit us early and you can have a better and healthier lifestyle.

**In summary, we can do a lot more for you than you may think.**

Thank you

Tipu Sultan MD and Staff

**For patients seeking a more thorough (although still not complete) list of conditions we treat:**

- Gastrointestinal: Chronic digestive problems like constipation, diarrhea, gas, belching, bloating, indigestion, irritable bowel syndrome, GERD, acid reflux, gall bladder disease, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, peptic ulcer, or celiac disease
- Psychological, Emotional or Neurological: Headaches, migraines, depression, bipolar disorder, Manic-depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), phobic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcoholism, hyperactivity, ADHD or ADD in children, Autism, Tics, Tourette's Syndrome Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinsonism, or seizures
- Endocrine-related: Hypothyroidism, goiters, grave's disease, diabetes, adrenal insufficiency, chronic fatigue, weight gain (weighing 20 lbs or more above optimum weight), erectile dysfunction, or reduced libido
- Dermatological: Atopic Dermatitis (eczema), acne, urticaria (hives), psoriasis, acne rosacea, or unexplained rashes
- Musculoskeletal: Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic back pain, lupus, osteoporosis, and various other pains
- Cardiovascular: Hypertension, heart disease (heart attack, coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction, bypass surgery), stroke, high cholesterol, high triglycerides
- Genitourinary:
  - a. Women: recurrent vaginal yeast infections, menstrual irregularity, PMS, menopause, endometriosis, polycystic ovarian disease, fibrocystic breast, gestational diabetes (high blood sugar during pregnancy), artificial menopause following hysterectomy or oophorectomy (ovaries removed)
  - b. Men: enlarged prostate or prostatitis
  - c. Both men & women: recurrent kidney stones, recurrent bladder or urinary tract infections, or interstitial cystitis.
- Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT): Allergic rhinitis, hay fever, chronic sinusitis (repeated sinus infections), sinus problems, nasal polyps, or Meniere's disease.
- Pulmonary: Asthma, wheezing, difficulty breathing, and difficulty taking deep breaths, heaviness in chest.
- Ophthalmic: Macular degeneration of dry kind