

## Questions and Answers

**Q. How big a business is health quackery, and how can one tell a quack so as not to risk health and dollars?**

**A.** Quackery is very big business in the USA. It is a ten billion dollar scandal, according to a report by the chairman of the subcommittee on Health and long-term care (appointed by the select committee on aging, House of Representatives). See U.S. government publication 98-435. It particularly preys upon the aged and the ignorant.

One can tell a quack by such characteristics as the following:

1. Extravagant claims. When a thing sounds too good to be true, it usually is.
2. A damning of all people and things associated with the medical establishment.
3. The claim of constant persecution.
4. Diagnostic deficiencies, including inadequate equipment, inadequate training and inadequate methods.
5. Exaggerates one single source of all healing—a method, a food, or a drug. Life is complex and just as disease is multifaceted, so are genuine healing approaches.
6. Excessively original. Remember that "If it's new, it's rarely true; and if it's true, it's rarely new." Furthermore, "The truth is rarely simple, and never pure." Unless the "healer" can provide documentation from medical researchers for his distinctive contentions, the chances are very much against his being right in his claims.

**Q. Are you saying that one has to be a medical conformist in order to be safe?**

**A.** No. Most of the outstanding men of medicine are by no means conformist. They are well aware that orthodox medicine as practiced is, like all other human pursuits, a mixture of good and evil. Orthodoxy includes the fruit of ingenious research and accurate testing, but also some superstition and much tradition. Consider for how long children were unnecessarily losing their tonsils, and consider also how many new drugs like thalidomide have been short-lived and withdrawn from the market. The greatest deficiencies in the medical training of most physicians now in practice have been in the fields of nutrition and pharmacology—yet erroneous eating habits may be the source of at least fifty percent of our degenerative diseases, and the adverse reactions to drugs places over one million and a half people in the hospital every year, many of whom die.

**Q. Is it true that leaders in the medical establishment are now making a strong stand regarding the necessity of adequate diet in order to avoid the chief killers of this and other industrialized countries?**

**A.** It is indeed true. The famous McGovern report of a few years back is the best illustration. It echoed most of the things nutritionists have been calling for in recent decades. For example, it advocated a smaller proportion of fat and animal products, and increased use of fruits, vegetables and grains in their unrefined state, and a decrease in the use of salt and sugar.

**Q. Is cancer increasing or decreasing?**

**A.** There are a number of conflicting reports. But a recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* made a strong case for the fact that cancer is increasing. Approximately 434,000 people a year now die from it—at least one in every four people will die prematurely because of this scourge—many say one in three.

**Q. Is cancer just something out of the blue, or is it hereditary, or the food we eat?**

**A.** There are well over a hundred types of well-defined diseases we lump under the general term of "cancer." The World Health Organization and other groups emphatically declare that eighty percent of cancer is environmental, being the result of toxic chemicals, faulty nutrition, etc. Almost certainly, apart from tobacco, a diet of refined foods excessive in fat and protein is the major cause. But the person who refuses tobacco products, by that one choice has reduced his or her chances of cancer by thirty percent. The American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute are so convinced of the importance of dietary factors in cancer that they have issued dietary guidelines similar to the McGovern report. In literally dozens of countries the incidence of common cancers are directly proportionate to dietary animal fat intake.

**Q. Is the same true of blood vessel diseases, CHD and strokes?**

**A.** According to most researchers, emphatically yes.

**Q. What about things like Osteoporosis?**

**A.** A diet heavy in protein and phosphates (e.g., meat) lessens the absorption of calcium by the bones. Failure to spend some time daily in the open air exercising in the sunshine has a similar effect. The swallowing of calcium tablets is a poor substitute for proper diet and exercise.

**Q. What right have you got to talk about these things? Have you a medical degree?**

**A.** No, I have no medical degree, but two earned doctorates in other areas. I have studied preventive medicine (of necessity) for forty-five years or so, and have been greatly encouraged by many recent announcements from such medical leaders as Surgeon General Koop, who are urging upon individuals their personal responsibility for caring for their own health. See particularly Dr. J. H. Knowles' admonitions in the 1977 medical classic, *Doing Better: Feeling Worse*. All that the esteemed medical establishment can provide, according to top-notch medical authorities, only contributes on an average ten percent towards a person's health. The other ninety percent is largely in our own hands.

The best evidence for this statement, and the best evidence in general for the importance of the lay person applying preventive medicine intelligently, is the fact that "since the late 1960's, death rates in the United States from coronary heart disease have fallen steadily and markedly. . . . For persons aged 35 to 74 years, the rate of mortality from coronary heart disease has fallen by over thirty percent, resulting in more than 800,000 lives saved since 1968. Death rates from strokes have declined even more precipitously" (*New England Journal of Medicine*, April 18, 1985, 312:1053).

This saving of thousands of lives yearly is not the result of new medical techniques, but of changes in life-style resulting in a lowered incidence of the diseases. Furthermore, it is the most marked among the more educated. "The incidence rate among salaried employees fell twice as steeply as that among wage workers" (*Ibid.*, p. 1054). By 1979, less than ten percent of physicians were still smoking, compared with approximately forty percent of white men. Here then is preventive medicine at its best, and the more you read, the more likelihood you have of improving both the quality and quantity of your own life.

When one remembers that ninety-nine percent of us were born healthy, that seventy percent of diseases are diseases of choice, and that one out of every two Americans suffers from one or more chronic diseases that will endure till death, has not each of us not only the right, but the responsibility, of becoming familiar with the insights of preventive medicine? Scripture says: "Do thyself no harm" (Acts 16:28). And God's great desire is that we should abound in health physically, as spiritually (3 Jn 2). Much depends upon our daily sowing—in other words, our habits of life-style.