

## Natural Medicine and Pharmaceutical Treatment

Contrary to popular belief natural medicines can be used safely and effectively along side pharmaceutical or medical treatment. Natural medicines have the potential to reduce pharmaceutical side effects and to increase the efficiency of the drug. This allows patients to have better outcomes from the pharmaceuticals that are essential to their wellbeing, and to reduce the ones that are non-essential.

It is imperative that patients inform both their medical practitioner as well as their naturopath about any pharmaceuticals, vitamins, minerals, herbal medicines or homeopathics that they may be taking. Natural medicines are still medicines, and this means they have the potential for toxicity, side effects and interaction just like pharmaceuticals do (only much less frequently).

There are common nutrient deficiencies that can be caused by pharmaceutical drugs and then lead to unwanted effects. It is amazing how much better patients can feel when these deficiencies are addressed. Some common complaints that can be addressed with natural medicines are:

- Cramping and muscle tension with cholesterol lowering medication like Lipitor
- Depression and mood swings while taking the oral contraceptive Pill
- Erectile dysfunction with blood pressure lowering medication
- Loss of libido with antidepressant medication like Efexor
- Iron or B12 deficiency while taking antacids like Nexium
- Persistent cough associated with blood pressure lowering medication
- Digestive disturbance while taking antibiotics
- Frequent colds and flus while taking corticosteroids for Asthma or inflammation
- Stomach ulcers or stomach pain from anti-inflammatory medications

The list goes on and on.

Emma Petschack has a particular interest in pharmaceutical drugs and how they interact with natural medicines. She is more than happy to consult with G.Ps or specialists about the combination of natural medicines with pharmaceuticals, for the ultimate benefit of the patient. It is very important to bring in all pharmaceuticals that you are taking to any consultation with the naturopath, so as to clarify dosage and effects. It is exciting to be able to reduce dependence on pharmaceutical drugs and to find alternatives that are both safe and effective.

By: Emma Petschack