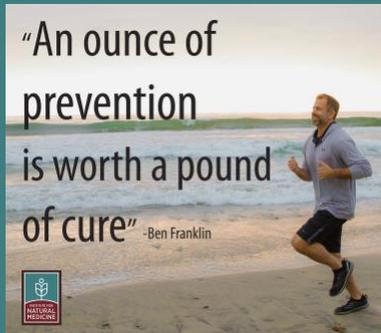




Naturopathic Medicine

FAQs

A service for consumers from the [American Association of Naturopathic Physicians \(AANP\)](#) and the [Institute for Natural Medicine \(INM\)](#)



HIGHLIGHTS

- *Half of all Americans live with at least one chronic disease, like heart disease or diabetes*
- *The right preventative care at every stage of life helps Americans stay healthy*
- *Prevention is a core principle of naturopathic medicine*
- *NDs spend extra time with patients to identify determinants of health and disease*
- *In addition to risk factors, NDs evaluate + address genetic, lifestyle, environmental, and social impacts on health*

Why and how do naturopathic doctors focus on prevention?

Naturopathic doctors (NDs) follow six guiding principles that serve as a philosophical platform for all of naturopathic medicine. The principles influence how NDs think about medicine, make clinical decisions, and most importantly, how you are treated as a patient. *Prevention* is one of these six core principles.

[Half of all Americans](#) live with at least one chronic disease, like [heart disease](#) or [diabetes](#). Chronic conditions are the leading causes of death and disability and a leading driver of [health care costs](#) in America. But among U.S. adults,

90 percent of Type 2 diabetes, 80 percent of cardiovascular disease, 70 percent of stroke, and 70 percent of colon cancer are potentially [preventable by modifiable lifestyle changes](#).

The right preventive care at every stage of life helps Americans stay healthy, avoid or delay the onset of disease, and keep diseases they already have from becoming worse or debilitating. However, [Americans use preventive services](#) at about half the recommended rate.

Licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) proactively focus on prevention both to benefit individual patients and to improve public health. Beyond reactively treating disease, naturopathic doctors emphasize and help individuals build optimal health by:

- [Spending extra time with patients](#) to identify the determinants of health and disease
- Approaching health through the lens of the [whole person](#)—body, mind, and spirit
- [Educating about and promoting healthy lifestyle](#) choices
- Assessing and addressing risk factors and implementing early interventions
- Determining genetic and hereditary susceptibility to disease
- Evaluating and addressing environmental and other external impacts on health
- Determining the impact of social relationships and community on health, and working to improve them, when relevant

[NDs are educated](#) and trained to use pharmacological drugs when necessary and can prescribe medication to manage symptoms if their state license permits. However, because naturopathic doctors focus on supporting the [body's health restoring and maintenance processes](#), they offer the gentlest, least toxic, evidence-based treatments first.



The AANP and INM would like to acknowledge [Amy Rothenberg, ND](#), for her contributions to the content of this FAQ



Non-drug approaches offer effective prevention strategies that can improve health outcomes. Studies have found a [40 percent average reduction in LDL](#) (i.e., comparable to statins) in patients who were asked to consume a whole foods plant-based diet low in both fat and refined carbohydrates (along with moderate exercise, meditation/yoga, and social support). In addition, studies have shown that proper testing, treatment, and lifestyle changes such as losing weight, adopting a healthy diet, and physical activity have beneficial effects on people with Type 2 diabetes, and are the cornerstones of diabetes prevention for at-risk individuals.

For those with an established disease that is not going away—such as chronic arthritis or permanent disabilities—naturopathic doctors use prevention strategies to strengthen health and improve quality of life and life expectancy. NDs’ rigorous training in areas such as [clinical nutrition](#), [behavioral medicine](#), [botanical medicine](#), and other natural treatments makes them expert at prescribing and supporting essential, effective, and enduring behavior and lifestyle modifications.

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