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Big Pharma's Secret

Some synthetic drugs may deplete the nutrients we need for our health.

Prescription drugs are everywhere. A 2008 study by Medco Health Solutions, Inc. reports that over half of all Americans are taking at least one prescription drug to manage a chronic health condition—that translates to over 150 million people. Another recent report reveals that of the more than 960 million doctor visits made annually, over 70% concluded with a physician reaching for the pad to scribble out at least one prescription.

The numbers are overwhelming. We recognize that these prescription medications are necessary in many cases, and by now most of us have become desensitized to the litany of side effects that accompany many prescription drug advertisements. However, it turns out that one critical side effect often appears to be quietly swept under the rug: Drug-induced nutrient depletion.

An Unknown Threat

Why is nutrient depletion important? We all know that good nutrition is crucial for health, vitality and life itself. Diminished nutrition in the body can be an insidious condition, creating puzzling symptoms that are often difficult to diagnose. In 2007 (the most recent year for which figures have been computed) nearly half a million people who were taking prescription drugs reported some kind of "adverse event" associated with those medications. Some experts believe that these adverse events may be associated with the nutrient depletions that are a consequence of taking some drugs.

Considering that many Americans may be getting fewer nutrients due to the effects of depleted soil, food processing, poor eating habits and other modern factors, the drug-induced depletion threat may be magnified—setting the stage for significant nutrition-related health complications that could generate long-term problems.

Though some drugs' tendency to interfere with nutrient absorption is a well-researched phenomenon, it remains relatively unknown to the American public—which makes it even more of a threat to our health and well-being. Encouragingly, some drug-induced nutrient depletions are now becoming more widely understood and accepted, such as oral contraceptives' depletion of vitamins B6 and B12, and cholesterol-lowering statin drugs' depletion of coenzyme Q10. Unfortunately, the list of drug-induced nutrient depletions is far longer and more complex. What's more troubling is that the issue has gone largely under the radar of public attention.

Proactive Solutions

Why aren't drug-induced nutrient depletions prominently listed alongside the other side effects associated with pharmaceuticals? The answer to that question may remain a mystery. However, by adopting a proactive attitude towards our health and exercising health freedom, we can discover which drugs deplete which nutrients and, if taking a prescription is necessary, take the right nutritional supplements to address any potential problems. Maintaining awareness and taking supplements may help us neutralize the drug-induced depletion issue altogether.

It is vital that in dealing with this issue—along with all issues related to health and health freedom—we remain vigilant and inquisitive. Doctors aren't going to stop reaching for their prescription pads anytime soon. So the next time your doctor hands you a prescription, have this question on the tip of your tongue: "Does this drug cause any nutrient depletions that I should be aware of?" Verify your doctor's answer with independent research, and then get replenishing nutrition in quality supplement form from the independent health food stores that are working hard to preserve your health freedom.

Furthermore, tell your friends and neighbors about drug-induced nutrient depletion. You'll not only help them protect their nutritional well-being, you'll help raise the public's awareness of this critical health issue. After all, if we don't do it, no one will. For more information on health freedom, visit the Nutritional Health Alliance at www.nha2010.com—join the NHA today! ❖

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