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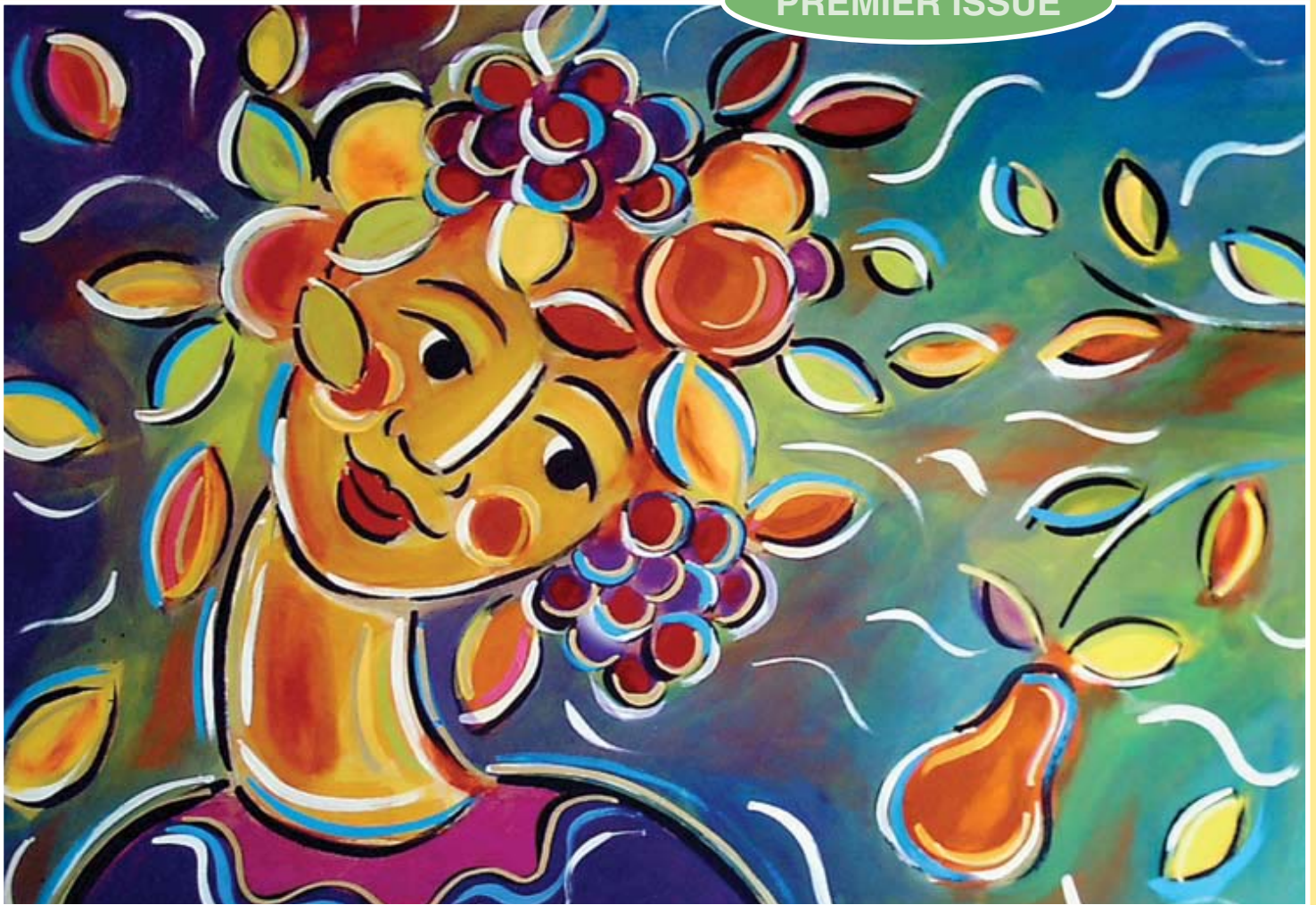
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# Today's Naturopathic Medicine

## Good for the Whole Person

by Lee Walker

**Naturopathic doctors take time to listen to patients and explain the principles of human health. Applied therapies include clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, tissue cleansing and detoxification, intravenous nutrition, lifestyle coaching and homeopathy.**

**A**yo Bankole, Riverside's first naturopathic doctor, learned early in his educational process that switching careers in midstream could be a good move. During several years of employment in urgent care and emergency departments, he observed that most visits were the result of chronic medical problems spiraling out of control. As a result of an inner conflict between his long-held belief that most chronic problems are more safely and effectively managed with improved lifestyle and nutrition, and the way conventional medicine discounts these aspects, as well as other important issues, Bankole experienced a disillusionment that paved the way for a timely career change.

Dr. Bankole has embraced naturopathic medicine because this form of health care, licensed by the state of California since 2003, encompasses the whole person and relies on a perspective that considers all aspects of the individual, from their diet to their lifestyle, even including cultural causes of disease. Whereas allopathic medicine seeks to relieve the patient's symptoms with medication, it gives little concern to understanding the individual or to determining all factors that might influence the patient and their health.

Naturopathic medicine emphasizes prevention, self-care and empowerment, relying on known principles to encourage activity of the healing system innate to our human design. Naturopathic doctors take time to listen to patients and explain the principles of human health. Applied therapies include clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, tissue cleansing and detoxification, intravenous nutrition, lifestyle coaching and homeopathy.

"I devote much of my clinical time to treating painful, injured or arthritic joints with prolotherapy," he says. "I'm often assisting patients with weight loss and using the most current research in the field of environmental medicine to highlight the relationship between environmental contamination and human health." Bankole also provides comprehensive detoxification programs.

He explains that prolotherapy restores joints to a healthier condition through injections along ligament attachment sites. Treatments stimulate healing by encouraging the release of growth factors and collagen activation. After completing



a series of treatments that supply the ingredients necessary and natural to healthy cartilage, a patient can expect to experience elimination of pain, increased joint function and restored mobility in the affected joint.

Total Wellness Center's comprehensive weight-loss programs help patients achieve health by also indirectly addressing heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and cancer risk. Remarks Bankole, "Key factors identified in successful weight-loss programs include patient accountability and medical supervision. Doctor-supervised visits allow diagnosis and treatment of unrecognized imbalances in insulin, cortisol, and glucose utilization, which make weight loss difficult." Experience has taught him that most weight-loss programs fail to serve patients because they promote gourmet-style meals and calorie restriction over healthy and sustainable eating. "Our weight-loss program," he adds, "is a permanent solution to obesity, because it addresses its fundamental causes."

Through medical training, Bankole has developed expertise in understanding the role environmental contamination has on human health and how to properly address it. "As our world becomes more polluted, we increasingly see more cases of allergies, multiple chemical sensitivity, heart disease and endocrine dysfunction," he says. Dysfunction of the delicate endocrine, immune and neurological systems, he believes, is concurrent with the in-

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creased body burden of xenoestrogens, solvents, plasticizers, hydrocarbons, heavy metals and other chemicals in today's environment.

"These toxins are fat-soluble, and therefore easily stored, overburdening our detoxification pathways and causing illness," explains Bankole. "This increase in chemical body burden increases free-radical production, DNA damage and ultimately causes cancer in susceptible individuals."

He recommends laboratory testing to identify specific toxins when needed. Patients are coached on how to identify and avoid the offending toxins, as well as what strategic dietary and supplementation measures to take to aid in tissue cleansing and detoxification. In select cases chelation therapy is employed; it uses medications that bind and remove heavy metals, complemented by intravenous vitamin and mineral therapy.

"I routinely find that the chemical body burden contributes to hormonal imbalance, obesity, high blood pres-

sure and other conditions," concludes Bankole. "Environmental contamination underlies many illnesses where successful treatment depends on its redress."

*Source: Ayo Bankole, a doctor of naturopathy, earned a Physician Assistant degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. and a Naturopathic Doctor degree from the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine in Tempe, Arizona. He holds a current California license in each field. He has received postgraduate training in prolotherapy and environmental medicine and is a member of the Naturopathic Academy of Therapeutic Injection, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, and the American College for the Advancement of Medicine.*

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