

NATUROPATHIC DOCTORS IN BC - GRANTED PRESCRIPTION RIGHTS!

As of September, 2010 many of BC's licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) are permitted to prescribe medications for patients. This will enhance the existing care that ND's currently provide and improve primary care options for patients. Below is a list of common questions posed by patients regarding this new improvement in scope of practice.

Why do Naturopathic Doctors need prescription rights?

Over the decades, ND's have lost access to many botanicals medicines and natural therapeutics. These substances, such as high doses of vitamins, amino acids, hormones, and herbs have slowly become "scheduled" – meaning prescription only.

How Does Prescribing Impact Patients?

For patients who require medication but who seek an ND as their primary care doctor, they can avoid additional trips to other practitioners for refills. As well, patients may be weaned off certain drugs by their ND. Therefore, lower doses of the drugs can be prescribed by the ND, while introducing non-drug alternatives.

Do Naturopathic Doctors have the Education Required to Prescribe Medications?

There are no licensed ND's in BC without at least seven years of education and medical training. All naturopathic doctors complete a minimum of three years of university level pre-medical training, then four years at an accredited naturopathic medical school. (There are two of these schools in Canada and four in the USA).

Following pre-med, the four year ND program covers many of the same courses as "conventional" medical school, such as pharmacology training, biochemistry, microbiology, physiology, and pathology. Furthermore, BC's naturopathic doctors take an additional pharmacology upgrade course and exams prior to prescribing.

Why do Naturopathic Physicians Want to Prescribe? Why is the profession becoming just like MDs?

Naturopathic medicine is focused on each patient's distinct health needs. Naturopathic Doctors seek to find the safest, most effective, and least invasive therapy for treatment. The treatment tools that I use include clinical nutrition, vitamins, botanical medicine, homeopathy, acupuncture, and Bowen Therapy. Having prescription rights will only enhance and not replace my current treatment regimes. In some cases, even if only temporarily, prescription medication may be an important element in helping a patient recover in a quick and complete manner.