

# The Symptom-Centered Model of Conventional Medicine

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Many people are now on medications, yet chronic illness is still on the rise because doctors focus on symptom management instead of fixing underlying metabolic and cellular dysfunction
- › Nearly half of U.S. adults take prescription drugs monthly, with 13.5% taking five or more medications. This polypharmacy puts them at risk of side effects that outweigh the drugs' benefits
- › Prescription drugs like statins, insulin, and antidepressants don't fix metabolic dysfunction. They suppress symptoms while causing side effects that require even more medications
- › Many patients continue taking unnecessary medications because doctors rarely reevaluate prescriptions. These drugs are treated as permanent solutions rather than temporary interventions to help rebalance your body
- › True healing requires moving beyond symptom management to support your body's natural healing abilities. Optimize your cellular health rather than treating isolated symptoms

Modern health care is failing to make people healthier. Chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and autoimmune disorders are more common than ever, yet doctors continue to rely on the same outdated strategies.

Instead of looking at the root cause of disease, the medical system focuses on treating symptoms. You feel pain? Take a pill. Your blood pressure is high? Here's another prescription. But masking symptoms doesn't lead to real healing — it just keeps you on an endless cycle of medication, side effects, and more health problems.

The real issue is that conventional medicine ignores the role of cellular energy in maintaining health. Every function in your body depends on your cells producing enough energy. When energy production slows down, disease develops. But instead of focusing on restoring this energy, most treatments just manage the symptoms that appear when things start breaking down.

If you've ever wondered why so many people take daily medications yet never seem to get better, you're not alone. The health care system isn't designed to heal — it's designed to keep people coming back for more treatments. It's time to rethink the way you approach your health. By understanding how the symptom-centered model works and how it keeps people trapped in a cycle of illness, you'll be able to take control of your health and start looking for real solutions.

## **Why the Current 'Band-Aid' Approach Fails to Heal**

When you visit a doctor for a chronic health problem, a part of the usual procedure is leaving with a prescription. If your cholesterol is high, you get a statin. If your blood sugar is high, you get insulin. If you're feeling anxious or depressed, you're handed an antidepressant. These medicines are sometimes even framed as "preventive" treatments, but none of them address why your body is out of balance in the first place.

- **Medications suppress symptoms, not root causes** — Your body doesn't just randomly produce too much cholesterol or struggle with blood sugar regulation. These are signs of deeper metabolic dysfunction.<sup>1</sup> Instead of investigating the cause, you get medications to suppress symptoms so that you feel like the problem is being managed.

- **Symptom management maintains the disease state** — If you need to take medication for life to stay "healthy," then it's not truly preventing anything. Instead, it's maintaining a disease state while keeping symptoms under control.
- **Statins lower cholesterol but ignore arterial damage** — These drugs lower cholesterol, but cholesterol itself isn't the root cause of heart disease. Your body produces cholesterol because it is essential for cellular integrity, hormone synthesis, tissue repair, and overall health.<sup>2</sup>

Heart disease is more likely driven by endothelial damage from poor diet, smoking, pollution, toxins, and stress. When the arterial walls are damaged, your body sends cholesterol as part of the repair process.

- **Cholesterol is a response to damage, not the cause** — Cholesterol accumulates at damaged sites as a response to injury, not the cause of it. Lowering cholesterol without addressing these underlying causes does nothing to prevent heart disease.

Worse, statins have damaging side effects, including muscle pain, fatigue, cognitive impairment, and an increased risk of diabetes by disrupting glucose metabolism.<sup>3</sup>

So, while your cholesterol numbers look better on paper, your overall health is actually declining.

- **Insulin use doesn't reverse insulin resistance** — Insulin injections lower blood sugar, but they don't fix the reason your body became insulin-resistant in the first place. Over-relying on insulin also worsens your condition by contributing to weight gain and further metabolic dysfunction.<sup>4,5</sup> Hence, the solution isn't more insulin — it's restoring proper energy production in the cells by addressing diet, movement, and environmental stressors.
- **Antidepressants create the illusion of healing** — Antidepressants follow the same flawed approach. They are overprescribed, given to people who may not actually need them, and used as a quick fix for emotional distress rather than true clinical depression.<sup>6,7</sup> This creates a false sense of improvement while underlying issues,

like chronic stress, poor diet, sleep deprivation, and unresolved trauma, remain unaddressed.

- **Long-term use leads to new side effects** — Over time, the reliance on antidepressants leads to long-term use, even when the original problem has improved or was never severe enough to require drug intervention in the first place.

Antidepressants also put you at risk of side effects, ranging from dizziness, restlessness, headaches, and dry mouth,<sup>8</sup> to emotional numbness, psychosis, cognitive decline, and suicidal ideation. Read "[The Dark Side of Antidepressants](#)" to learn more about the side effects of this drug.

- **Even heartburn medications make the problem worse** — Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) commonly prescribed for acid reflux work by blocking stomach acid production. However, contrary to popular belief, heartburn is often caused by having too little stomach acid, not too much.

Taking a PPI worsens the underlying issue by further reducing your stomach acid levels. They've also been linked to a higher risk of heart problems like myocardial infarction.<sup>9</sup> Find out more about the dangers of PPIs in "[More Proof Heartburn Products Are Dangerous](#)."

- **Suppressing symptoms doesn't restore health** — This symptom-first approach is the reason so many people take medications for life without getting better. If medications actually prevented disease, then chronic illness rates should be going down, but they aren't.

More people than ever are on prescription drugs, yet chronic disease is at an all-time high. This is because you can't drug your way to better health. When you only treat the surface-level problem, the real issue continues to get worse beneath it.

## The Rise of Polypharmacy

Most people don't realize how widespread prescription drug use has become. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),<sup>10</sup> nearly half of all U.S. adults (49.9%) take at least one prescription drug every month, and almost a quarter (24.7%) take three or more.

Alarming, 13.5% of people take five or more prescriptions in a 30-day period, contributing to the staggering 1 billion medications provided or prescribed annually. This phenomenon is called polypharmacy, which means taking multiple medications at once.

- **Polypharmacy creates a dangerous cycle of dependency** — A person might start with a single blood pressure medication, but within a few years, they're on drugs for cholesterol, reflux, diabetes, and depression. Every new prescription is meant to "help" manage symptoms, but in reality, it creates a dangerous spiral of drug dependency.<sup>11</sup>
- **Multiple medications increase the risk of serious side effects** — Polypharmacy comes with serious risks, as the interactions between multiple medications can lead to unpredictable side effects. For instance, a blood pressure medication combined with an antidepressant increases the risk of falls, dizziness, and cognitive decline.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, acid reflux drugs taken with osteoporosis medications reduce calcium absorption and lead to bone fractures.<sup>13</sup> Statins mixed with diabetes medications disrupt blood sugar regulation even further.<sup>14</sup>

- **Medications become lifelong crutches** — Over time, polypharmacy turns into dependency, where people can't function without their daily medications.<sup>15</sup> Many drugs cause withdrawal effects if you try to stop taking them, making it feel like you "need" them forever.

Antidepressants, for example, cause severe withdrawal symptoms if stopped too quickly.<sup>16</sup> Acid reflux medications create a rebound effect, where stopping them makes your reflux worse than before.<sup>17</sup>

- **Side effects lead to more prescriptions** — The long-term side effects of medications often create new health problems. For example, pain medications damage the liver,<sup>18</sup> antidepressants cause weight gain,<sup>19</sup> and blood pressure medications lead to chronic fatigue.<sup>20</sup>

Instead of solving health problems, medications often create new ones that require even more prescriptions. This is how people end up on an expanding list of drugs, never actually improving their health.

- **Prescriptions are rarely reevaluated** — Doctors seldom reassess whether all prescribed medications are still needed. Once a prescription is started, it often becomes permanent, even when the original condition has improved.<sup>21</sup>
- **The real goal is restoring proper function** — Medications should be used as short-term interventions to help the body rebalance — not as lifelong crutches. Instead of focusing on adding more drugs, the real goal should be finding ways to support the body's natural ability to function properly.

To learn how to assess whether your current prescriptions are excessive and causing more harm than good, read "[How to Tell if You're Overprescribed Medications](#)."

## **Real Stories of Medications Creating More Problems Than They Solve**

Most people believe that if they follow modern medicine, they'll get better. But for many, that simply isn't true. You might know someone who did everything right — took the prescribed medications, followed the recommended treatments — yet their health still declined. Sometimes, medications that are meant to help end up doing more harm than the original condition they were prescribed for. This cycle happens all the time.

- **Dora's Parkinson's diagnosis reversed by stopping medication** — The World Health Organization has published a series of real-life cases where patients were harmed rather than helped by the drugs they were prescribed.<sup>22</sup> Among those case studies

we have Dora, a 79-year-old woman, developed uncontrollable shaking, head bobbing, and tongue movements.

She was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and told nothing further could be done. However, during their discussion, the doctor noted that the only time she'd seen a reversal of symptoms was in cases of drug-induced Parkinson's. This prompted Dora's daughter to review her mother's long list of prescriptions. Within a week of stopping all medications, Dora's symptoms disappeared, and she regained her independence.

- **Naila was nearly placed on long-term opioids for no reason** — Naila, an 88-year-old woman, was prescribed oxycodone for pain after fracturing her back, adding to the 10+ medications she was already taking. When she returned for a follow-up, her back had healed, but instead of discontinuing the oxycodone, the doctor suggested placing her on a long-term pain management plan. This would have left her on a powerful opioid she no longer needed.

Fortunately, Naila's daughter questioned this decision. She asked the doctor to review every medication her mother was taking and check whether each one was still necessary. One by one, they went through the list, and to their shock, all but one medication was removed. Naila had been continuously taking drugs for conditions she no longer had because the doctor kept prescribing them instead of reassessing their need.<sup>23</sup>

- **Rahul's case shows what happens when no one steps in** — Dora and Naila were fortunate to have someone advocating for their health, but how many others are still taking unnecessary medications without questioning them?

Rahul, a 76-year-old man, was one of those people. He was given a diuretic for high blood pressure. Three weeks later, he developed a urinary tract infection, which doctors believed was caused by dehydration from the diuretic. Instead of adjusting his treatment, they simply added more medications — a course of antibiotics and an ACE inhibitor to replace the diuretic.

Rahul also had Type 2 diabetes and was prescribed insulin, an oral diabetes medication, and a cholesterol-lowering drug. When community health pharmacists reviewed his medications, they found he was on a higher starting dose of the ACE inhibitor, which was causing dizziness and fainting. He was also taking a double dose of cholesterol medication by mistake and storing his insulin in the freezer, making it ineffective.<sup>24</sup>

- **Patients are rarely monitored after prescriptions are written** — These cases, documented by the WHO,<sup>25</sup> reveal a troubling reality in which patients are often prescribed medications without being monitored to determine whether the drugs are actually helping or causing harm.<sup>26,27</sup>
- **Being proactive is essential to avoid harm** — Overprescription, misdiagnosis, and dangerous drug interactions put many people at risk every year.<sup>28</sup> This is why patients and their families need to be proactive in questioning medications, asking about possible risks, and ensuring prescriptions are necessary. Too often, people assume that more medications mean better health — but in most cases, they do just the opposite.

## The Wakeup Call

The epidemic of chronic disease we face today is not just a matter of genetics or aging — it is a direct consequence of systemic failures in medicine, nutrition, and consumer health education. For decades, conventional medicine has focused on treating symptoms rather than addressing the underlying cause of disease.

- **Symptom management is not health care** — If you follow this model, you'll likely find yourself on a lifetime of prescriptions, managing symptoms but never truly healing. This is not real health care — it's simply disease management.
- **Healing begins by challenging the status quo** — To change the course of your health, you must step outside the symptom-centered approach. This means questioning unnecessary medications, re-evaluating long-term prescriptions, and



actively working toward reducing dependency on pharmaceutical interventions whenever possible.

- **Your body knows how to heal if you let it** — True healing doesn't come from simply waiting for the next prescription. It comes from supporting your body's natural ability to repair and restore itself.
- **Modern medicine has failed to deliver health** — Just because the current system is broken doesn't mean you have to follow it. The good news is that chronic illness is largely preventable and, in many cases, reversible.
- **Start where health truly begins** — The key to reversing the current trajectory of declining health is to focus on where true health begins — at the cellular level. It's time to stop treating the body like a collection of symptoms and start supporting it as a whole, self-healing system.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Modern Medicine and Chronic Disease**

**Q: Why doesn't modern medicine actually heal chronic diseases?**

**A:** Because modern medicine often treats symptoms instead of fixing what's causing the problem. You're given pills for blood pressure or pain, but the underlying issues, such as poor diet, low energy, or stress, are never addressed.

**Q: What happens if you stay on medication for years?**

**A:** Long-term medication use can lead to new health problems. Many drugs come with side effects that cause fatigue, weight gain, or other issues — and often lead to more prescriptions over time.

**Q: What is polypharmacy and why is it dangerous?**

**A:** Polypharmacy means taking multiple medications at once. This increases the risk of side effects, drug interactions, and confusion. It's common in older adults and makes health problems worse instead of better.

**Q: Can medications do more harm than good?**

**A:** Yes. Some people are given drugs they no longer need or never needed in the first place. Over time, this leads to more health problems, especially when no one checks whether those prescriptions are still necessary.

**Q: How can I take control of my health without relying on drugs?**

**A:** Start by restoring cellular energy through nutrition, movement, sleep, and environmental detox. Remove what's harming your body and give it what it needs to work better. Many health problems improve when you fix the basics.

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