

DID YOU KNOW?

*Women are four times more likely than men to be affected by SAD.

*Lower vitamin D levels have been linked to higher risks of some cancers.

*Insomnia is estimated to effect 30 percent of the general public.

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EDUCATION: THE FOUNDATION FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

Jason J Harmon, ND

The more educated you are, regarding your health, the greater chance you will have in reaching an optimal state of health and wellness. Often a road map to better health is recommended without the understanding of why this path is best for you. You need to know how your health will improve once you have reached your goal and what impact this path will make in your life.

Without education, it is difficult to get motivated, to stay the path and endure until your goal has brought you better health. This is why medical care at Avante is infused with our continued commitment to empower our patients with education to motivate them to overcome difficult health obstacles.

At Avante, our commitment to education for the Alaskan community is a mission that we all share, staff and providers alike.



We, at Avante, are about to take this commitment to a whole new level. I will be spending the next few months preparing the layout, content and structure for a high definition, educational, video library that will be available for free, for our patients, via our web site.

From cooking classes to detailed health tips, we will catalogue our classes, courses, and topics for advancing your education via online video. We invite you to join us when we launch this exciting project as we take our commitment to health education to you and people across the state.

IPL-LIGHT THERAPY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Liane Erickson, ND

Avante Medical Center has acquired another treatment modality to further help our patients. The newest member of the Avante team is an Intense Pulse Light (IPL) device which can be used for psoriasis, acne treatment and skin rejuvenation. Phototherapy (or light therapy) uses light and heat to medically treat various skin conditions. Phototherapy has been used in naturopathic medicine since the 1800's in Europe when water and light spas were built to combat conditions such as tuberculosis, smallpox and psoriasis. Over the years, the techniques to employ light therapy have improved with today's machines using wavelengths, light intensity and exposure duration to focus treatment on specific needs and conditions. What makes Avante's machine special is that it uses specific filters to protect the skin, while still using the intense light energy to heal the skin without risk of U.V. damage.

Skin Rejuvenation

This is a collective term for wrinkles, age spots, sun spots and spider veins which are the outward manifestation of aging or sun damaged skin. Phototherapy uses short pulses of light and heat to target areas where hemoglobin and melanin in pigmented areas have gathered. The light breaks up the spots and new cells replace them. Heat triggers the wound healing process and collagen will rebuild areas where fine lines and wrinkles once were. It's Botox without the Botox! Treatments vary based on type and size of the lesion.

NATUROPATHY-DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE

Jennifer Lush, ND

Many people inquire what they would gain from receiving health care from a naturopathic doctor (ND) as opposed to a primary care MD or an allopathic practitioner. Naturopathic doctors are educated at accredited naturopathic medical schools and receive training as primary care doctors. In addition, they are extensively trained in nutrition, herbal or botanical medicine; proper use of vitamins, minerals and natural hormones, as well as homeopathy. ND's may also obtain specialty training in such areas as pediatrics, oncology, craniosacral therapy, allergy treatment, physical medicine and acupuncture.

However, the differences in working with a ND become the most apparent when a patient makes their first office visit. It is typical for the first appointment to last from 60 to 90 minutes, with the entire time spent face to face with the ND. The reason for this longer time spent with a provider ensures the naturopath that a very thorough history can be taken. Most patients are able to articulate the areas of their health that need improvement, but it takes longer than the average medical office visit of 5 to 15 minutes to share the important aspects of a health history. ND's all train in basic counseling coursework, which is an integral part of active listening and gathering the correct information from their patients.

In the extensive health history, naturopathic physicians are able to utilize their nutritional training to help their patients find the most beneficial pattern of eating for their individual lifestyle and health needs. Many health concerns have a foundation in poor nutrition and altered digestive health, which a ND can help to balance. A fundamental goal in naturopathic medicine is establishing and treating the cause of the disease, not simply masking the symptoms of the disease with medications.

ND's are well trained in the use of proper laboratory and radiological testing to screen out major health concerns and know when it is appropriate to refer their patients on to specialists. They are also trained in specialized testing such as screening for food allergies, salivary hormones, heavy metal and urinary neurotransmitter levels.

To see the difference, we can take the example of a patient with acid reflux or heartburn and the approach a ND may take. If you have approached your provider with this problem, it is possible that you were given the "purple pill," which works to reduce HCL in the body, thereby reducing acid secretion. This may be the only suggestion a patient receives for their reflux. A ND approach would begin by addressing your dietary habits (not only types of foods, but how long you go without food); coffee, smoking or alcohol habits and stress level. (When a person is under stress blood is shunted away from the digestive tract and digestive disorders can develop.) Other areas to consider would be work and home environment, use of medications and supplements, physiological causes, glandular or hormonal suppression and nutritional deficiencies. Treatment would likely be an assortment of herbs or vitamins to heal the mucosal lining of the digestive tract so that the normal acid secretion could occur, but not cause reflux or pain. If food allergies or intolerances are causing inflammatory changes in the digestive tract, these can be easily diagnosed and treated as well. A variety of methods such as salivary hormone testing, blood tests, or even a good history can aid in diagnosing hormonal and glandular deficiencies that can also be balanced with natural substances, herbal medicines, and vitamins and minerals.

Ongoing care with a ND is typically managed with appointments that are at least 30 minutes (and often longer) in length. ND's commonly are available to follow up with individualized food plans, brief phone calls, or email communication so that their patients feel they can receive the proper support in changing and maintaining optimal health. When you seek the care of a naturopathic doctor, you are forming a lasting relationship to continue pursuing a long term path of wellness.

"Many health concerns have a foundation in poor nutrition and altered digestive health..."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fall Detox Class

Please join Dr. Liane Erickson and Dr. Jennifer Lush as they show you ways to cleanse your body through diet, supplements and body treatments. Cost: \$200 (not including supplements)

Intro Class: Tuesday Oct 9, 6 to 8 p.m. at Avante

Natural Pantry Walk: Thurs. Oct 11, 6 to 7 p.m.

First Cooking Class: Thurs. Oct 18, 6 to 8 p.m.

Intro. to yoga with Colleen Peterson: Tues. Oct 23, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Second Cooking Class/Wrap Up: Thurs. Oct 25, 6 to 8 p.m.

(Pre-registration and payment is required, so please call Avante at 770-6700 to sign up)

A healthy way to spend your PFD!

Valdez Clinic--Sat. October 27th & Sun. October 28th

Dr. Liane Erickson will be holding clinic at Providence Medical Center to provide well child exams, women's physicals (including Pap smears), as well as general family medicine. Please call Avante at (907) 770-6700 to book your appointment today.

Bones for Life Postural Healing with Grant Gibbs

Bones for Life is a program for stimulating bone strength through natural movement and weight bearing posture.

Where: Avante Medical Center

When: Every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Cost: \$25 per class or \$90 for four classes

Register: Please contact Grant Gibbs at 350-3263

Natural Pantry Walk Through w/ Dr. Harmon and Dr. Rogers

Dates: Oct. 18, Nov. 15th, Dec. 13th

Time: 6 p.m.

Calling All Moms

Avante's mom's group is starting up again with some changes this fall. Gatherings will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Please arrive on time, as we want to be prompt for our speakers. Please bring a healthy snack like fruit, muffins or homemade cookies to share with the group.

October 4: Join us for children's yoga! Two yogi mothers who specialize in teaching moms and their kids from birth to six years will be our guides. Wear loose clothing and come with your stretchy kidlet.

November 1: Carol Nordeen, who runs "The Cabin School" and has taught preschoolers in Anchorage for more than 20 years, will talk about the importance of routine and rhythm in a young child's life. Waldorf inspired teaching emphasizes this rhythm through stories, games and celebrations throughout the year. Carol will discuss important elements in Waldorf education and how we as parents can incorporate these ideas into our children's lives.

December 6: Bring your best ideas for handmade and unique holiday gifts for children. We will have an informal gathering to share and teach each other how to give our kids gifts that do not require a battery and pollute our landfills. If you wish to write out instructions for your craft/idea, photocopying is available.

Healthy Cooking 101: How to survive an elimination diet

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 6:30 to 9 p.m.

Has someone at Avante told you or your loved one to remove dairy, gluten or eggs for a period of time? Are you wondering what you're going to eat for the next 6 weeks? Join Dr. Erickson as she outlines basic cooking for people with food sensitivities or just those with an interest in healthier eating habits. Cost \$60. Call Avante to register: 770-6700

For more information, class updates, additions or reschedules, please visit our website.

IPL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Psoriasis

Those who suffer from psoriasis know what a difficult condition it is to treat. Skin cells regenerate 10 times faster than normal, creating white flaky buildup over red inflamed skin. For many, the constant peeling and flaking comes with terrible itching and burning. Even when naturopathic treatment uncovers the root cause of the triggers, getting rid of the pre-existing scales is very difficult. Phototherapy works by adding light to heal the areas without the damaging UVA and UVB rays. IPL utilizes visible light, primarily from the yellow and green spectrums, to close down the underlying blood vessels that maintain psoriatic plaque. Treatments are typically 2 times/week for 4-5 weeks.

Acne

Acne treatment has an excellent record with using light therapy. In fact, trials have shown that it has equal benefits to using oral prescription medication, only without harmful side effects. Acne has been shown to be caused by one specific bacterium called propionibacterium or P.acnes. This bacteria secretes a pigment known as porphyrin which, when stimulated, produces a molecule of singlet oxygen which attacks the bacteria. Acne phototherapy causes a stimulus in this porphyrin to produce the bacteria destroying oxygen. Treatments are typically 2 times/week for 4 weeks.

Please visit our website to view information regarding this exciting new machine.

ARE YOU MISSING BELOVED SLEEP?

Christine Sagan, FNP

We spend a large part of our lives in bed, and most of us understand that proper sleep is essential to our well-being, but how often do we get a good night's sleep?

The most common sleep complaint throughout adulthood is insomnia, estimated to affect 30 percent of the general population. People may tolerate some sleep disturbance, but the negative consequences – fatigue, irritability, impaired concentration and poor performance – must be considered important reasons to pursue treatment of insomnia.

Insomnia is a symptom and a risk factor for both depression and anxiety and other medical disorders. Chronic medical conditions can disrupt sleep, and insomnia is linked to numerous medical diseases.

There is a strong link found between stress and sleep. An individual's response to stress and external stressors triggering insomnia are higher in insomniacs. In one study, stress levels correlated with insomnia, whereas regular exercise positively affected sleep abilities!

Prescription medications, caffeine, and alcohol can precipitate insomnia. Insomnia is more likely found in women, especially post menopausal women, and the quality and amount of sleep declines with an increase in age. Insomnia's physical impairments are reversible if properly treated, but how do we identify the problem and go about its treatment?

In the past, insomnia was treated as a short-term problem. Now it is recognized as a chronic disorder that has consequences and health risks and certainly impacts quality of life. Sleep loss results in impaired cognitive functioning – such as memory – which can result in decreased work performance.

Multiple studies on insomnia have found that cognitive-behavioral therapy is an effective treatment. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine Task Force found that cognitive behavioral therapy is a reliable, durable improvement to drug alternatives. Up to 80 percent of people who received such treatment had measurable benefits. Because of the long-term efficacy and minimal adverse effects, cognitive behavioral therapy is considered first-line treatment for insomnia.

Cognitive therapy intends to reframe sleep misconceptions and reduce excessive emotional reactions that can perpetuate insomnia. Some of the components of cognitive behavioral therapy address sleep hygiene, relaxation therapy, sleep restriction, re-association, and restructuring attitudes about sleep. Treatment of underlying medical problems such as sleep-disordered breathing, restless legs and depression are important as well. Research suggests adjunct treatment for insomnia should include stress management and improvement of coping strategies.

Treatment is multi-faceted and focused on identifying co-morbid conditions, stressors, and lifestyle factors.

The prescription medications for insomnia are not all the same, and newer drug classes work on different mechanisms in the brain which allow people new options. Medication can be a helpful adjunct to therapy, but will not solve the disorder alone.

If you suffer from insomnia, work on attainable lifestyle changes such as eliminating caffeine and other natural stimulants. Serotonin is a brain chemical that helps initiate sleep. Alcohol releases adrenaline that disrupts the production of serotonin, so avoiding alcohol is recommended.

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Lifestyle changes, such as avoiding alcohol, can have a profound effect on the quality of sleep.

AVANTE WELCOMES FOUR NEW PROVIDERS TO OUR MEDICAL TEAM

2007 has been a growth year at Avante Medical Center as we strive to provide the best and most diverse care to our patients and the Alaska community at large. We wanted to take this time to introduce you to those providers who have joined the Avante team in 2007. For more detailed information regarding these providers, please visit our website at www.avantemedicalcenter.com and click on "Providers"

MICHELLE ROGERS, ND, MS



Michelle Rogers, ND, MS, is a Naturopathic Physician, who graduated from Bastyr University in 2001. She subsequently completed a prestigious two-year, hospital-based residency in Integrative Oncology at Cancer Treatment Centers of America. She went on to receive her Masters of Science in Evaluative Clinical Sciences from Dartmouth College in 2005. Most recently, Dr. Rogers worked at the Center for Integrative Medicine at Northwestern Memorial Physician's Group in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Rogers specializes in integrative oncology, mood disorders such as anxiety and depression, and difficult medical cases with his emphasis on integrative internal medicine.

Dr. Rogers is excited to become the newest member of Avante Medical Center, and looks forward to educating and empowering patients to provide them with the tools they need to make informed decisions about their own integrative healthcare.

CHRISTINE SAGAN, FNP

Christine Sagan joins Avante Medical Center as a family nurse practitioner. She holds a Master's of Nursing degree from the University of Alaska Anchorage. She is a member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and the Alaska Nurse Practitioner Association. From 2001-07, Christine worked as a nurse on the medical-surgical unit at Alaska Native Medical Center. She has also worked as an independent nurse contractor with Arbitre Consulting Services. Christine's innate problem-solving skills benefit her as a practitioner who believes in complete mind-body health.



A native of Kalamazoo, Mich., Christine has traveled extensively to South and Central America, Europe and Asia. She and her husband Nathan live in West Anchorage with their two young daughters, Petula and Daphne.

TORREY SMITH, ND



Dr. Smith graduated with a degree in naturopathic medicine from National College of Naturopathic Medicine (NCNM) in Portland, Ore. in 1992. Dr. Smith loves utilizing naturopathic tools to care for the whole person. This includes using nutrients, western herbs and Chinese medicine, body biochemistry and the latest in scientific medical studies. He enjoys research and is always learning and studying.

"I specialize in people that are ready to get well. I like to focus on how they are going to feel when they are well, balanced and happy."

GRANT GIBBS, MTPT

When Grant was two, he first discovered he could heal people by rubbing two sticks together. Oh wait, that's when he discovered fire....😊

Grant Gibbs is a Certified Myofascial Trigger Point Therapist and a Certified Bones For Life Instructor. He has 18 years experience as a massage therapist and 15 years as a yoga instructor. "Relieving pain is part of what's helpful. Using appropriate, painless stretching, identifying and addressing perpetuating factors and gradually embracing new movement patterns gives people the tools to stay well."



VITAMIN D AND CANCER RISK

Michelle Rogers, ND

Multiple studies have recently demonstrated the link between good health and adequate vitamin D intake. Proper levels of vitamin D appear to have a beneficial impact on diseases such as high blood pressure, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, seasonal affective disorder, diabetes, chronic musculoskeletal pain, fertility, and naturally boost the immune system. Recent evidence also links proper vitamin D levels to decreased rates of many different cancers.

An observational study of 972 patients with breast cancer was compared to women without breast cancer with regards to vitamin D intake through either cod liver oil, milk or sun exposure. The study found that women who had the highest rates of 'outdoor activities' from ages 10 to 19 had a 35 percent reduced risk of developing breast cancer compared to those with the least sun exposure. Furthermore, use of cod liver oil during this same time period decreased the risk of developing breast cancer by 24 percent, and those who consumed greater than 10 glasses of milk weekly saw a 38 percent reduced risk of developing breast cancer compared to those subjects who did not drink milk(1).

Vitamin D appears to act on cancer cells by decreasing the tumor's ability to make new cells, and also increases the mechanism each cell has to 'self destruct' (called "apoptosis") if the cell is abnormal in comparison to the healthy cells which surround it.

Studies have shown that patients with multiple types of cancer have fewer side-effects from standard therapy when vitamin D levels are adequate. Multiple studies have shown that low levels of vitamin D are linked to greater risk of death for several types of cancers, such as breast, colon, ovary, lung, stomach, uterus, pancreas, rectum, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma(2). It is estimated that adequate vitamin D supplementation or exposure to ultraviolet light could save approximately 23,000 American lives per year from a reduction in cancer mortality alone(3).

Food sources of vitamin D are often obtained through vitamin D-fortified foods. There is a small amount of vitamin D in both egg yolks and butter. Cod liver oil is an excellent source of vitamin D. However, the majority of vitamin D in the body is created by the body as a result to sun exposure to the skin.

Vitamin D levels can easily be measured through a simple blood test. Contact your medical provider for additional information regarding vitamin D testing. If you are found to be deficient, this may be corrected with only three to four months of regular supplementation with vitamin D.

SLEEP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

Food sensitivities can cause insomnia, and a diet with refined carbohydrates and high sugar can interfere with sleep, especially if consumed before going to bed. If blood sugar is too low at night, hormones that regulate blood glucose levels are released (i.e. adrenaline and cortisol), and these hormones stimulate the brain and signal it to eat. The goal is to keep the blood sugar steady throughout the night. Ideas for good bedtime snacks include oatmeal, whole grains and other complex carbohydrates. These foods help maintain the blood sugar and increase levels of serotonin in the brain which in turn promotes sleep. Foods containing tryptophan – turkey, milk, almonds, cottage cheese, chicken, eggs, brown rice, soy, and halibut – may also help promote sleep.

Avante offers various supplements that can support the body to improve sleep quality. Some of those include--L-theanine – commonly found in green tea – which is an amino acid available as a supplement that can be calming, especially with anxiety. Vitamin B12 may help improve sleep and increase daytime concentration. Low melatonin levels have been correlated with low Vitamin B12 levels.

Don't underestimate the power of quality sleep and its effects on quality of life.

It is estimated that adequate vitamin D supplementation or exposure to ultraviolet light could save approx. 23,000 American lives per year.

SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER: TREATMENT WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION

Bethany Buchanan, FNP

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) affects many Alaskans in the winter and while it affects all ages and races, women are four times more likely than men to be affected. SAD is more than just depression, with other common and classic symptoms including an increase in appetite or carbohydrate cravings and sleeping too much. These symptoms show up in the winter and abate in the spring. About three years ago, I stumbled upon a helpful treatment which works well for most everyone who follows the suggested regime.

At night, when you are asleep, your body produces melatonin. In the morning, it is bright light that shuts off melatonin production. If there is no bright light, then melatonin sticks around making people still feel tired. It is also the act of melatonin shutting down that helps raise serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter responsible for wellbeing and contentment. If melatonin stays high, then serotonin levels are low resulting in a phenomenon of seasonal symptoms mentioned earlier.

Light therapy (LT) with a light box is the main treatment of choice. The American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association both recommend it as the first line of treatment. LT works by shutting down melatonin and increasing serotonin. There are multiple studies addressing LT, and most all show a positive outcome. Symptoms can resolve within a week. LT should be with white light at an intensity of 10,000 lux. Blue lights and other colors are being studied, but there is not enough research to make me feel comfortable recommending them. Lake Otis Pharmacy has a large selection of lights for therapeutic use. Insurance companies will sometimes pay for LT, so ask your provider about this.

Another treatment used to combat SAD is SAME. SAME is an amino acid that helps balance dopamine and serotonin in the brain. There is a plethora of research justifying SAME's role in depression. This product can be bought at Costco. It comes in a 200mg pill, and it is important to take 400mg twice a day or 200mg in the morning and 400mg in the evening on an empty stomach to get the full benefit. Most people under dose this supplement making it unhelpful.

Vitamin D, which I have written about in past Avante Times, also helps with SAD, especially when received as an IM injection. It is thought that Vitamin D may inhibit the binding of melatonin allowing for more serotonin to be available. Recently, Avante began carrying a 5000IU capsule, which may also work well for SAD if taken daily. It is very important to check your Vitamin D levels. Not everyone needs it and taking too much of this fat soluble vitamin is not recommended. It is also important to take Calcium with D to help with the absorption.

In summary, the combination of LT and/or SAME and Vitamin D seems to be a very effective treatment for SAD.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christine Sagan, FNP would like to start a monthly book club as an excuse to read books and gather with others for enlightened discussion. The first meeting will be at Avante Monday, October 22th at 7pm. The book to be discussed is "The China Study. Startling implications for diet, weight loss and long-term health" (2006) By Colin Campbell, PhD. This book came highly recommended by a colleague at a recent medical nutrition conference. The book is a national bestseller in which he writes about his years of research on nutrition and its effects on health and chronic disease. He is involved in the most comprehensive nutrition study ever conducted. He discusses his research findings in relation to obesity, diabetes, cancer, autoimmune disease and reviews principles of food and health. The book is fascinating and will surely spark interesting discussion. Questions? Email: saganfnp@gmail.com

Dr. Jason J. Harmon and Dr. Michelle Rogers are starting up the "Natural Pantry Walkthrough". Join us for an hour, each month, as we walk the isles and discuss topics from metabolism to label reading. For dates and times, please see page 3.

Christine Sagan will be lecturing on Seasonal Affective Disorder and Vitamin D Deficiency on Monday, Nov.13th at 7 p.m. at Avante Medical Center.

Saturday hours at Avante resume October 13th. Whether it's a cold, flu or lab draw, Saturdays at Avante are back from summer break!

WHO'S WHO AT AVANTE MEDICAL CENTER

Jason Harmon, ND, FABNO—Co-founder of Avante, Dr. Harmon is a Naturopathic Doctor specializing in cancer care. He continues to provide Alaska with primary as well as cancer care, committed to advancing education and world class medical care in the state of Alaska.

Bethany Buchanan, FNP—Co-founder of Avante, Bethany is a Family Nurse Practitioner practicing family medicine and women's health.

Lori Zitzmann, ANP—Lori is an Adult Nurse Practitioner specializing in hormone balancing, thyroid, gastro-intestinal disorders and personalized nutritional counseling.

Liane Erickson, ND—Dr. Erickson is a Naturopathic Doctor, specializing in pediatrics and family medicine. She works with fertility, nutritional counseling and practices Bowen therapy, a gentle form of body work.

Jennifer Lush, ND—Dr. Lush is a Naturopathic Doctor joining us from her successful clinic in Seattle. Dr. Lush provides comprehensive primary care, specializing in women's health, detoxification and weight management programs.

Chris Kallander, ANP—Chris is an Adult Nurse Practitioner focusing on urgent care, primary care, women's health and hormonal issues. She evaluates the healthcare needs of men, women and adolescents.

Pat Ketz—Pat specializes in allergy elimination using a technique known as NAETs.

Torrey Smith, ND—Dr. Smith practices full family healthcare utilizing natural medicine and Chinese herbs.

Gary Ferguson, ND—May brings the long awaited arrival of Dr. Gary Ferguson to Avante Medical Center. Dr. Ferguson has a special focus on men's health, diabetes and metabolic syndrome with a specialty in Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

Judy Hartford, CMTPT—Judy is a board certified Myofascial Trigger-point Therapist, in practice for 21 years. She treats all musculoskeletal and neuromuscular issues, including pain and injuries.

Grant Gibbs, CMTPT—Grant is also a board certified Myofascial Triggerpoint Therapist dealing with all musculoskeletal and neuromuscular issues. Grant also teaches Bones for Life.

Cathy Floyd—Cathy works in our allergy department using provocation/neutralization for comprehensive allergy treatment elimination.

Michelle Rogers, ND, MS—Dr. Rogers specializes in integrative oncology, mood disorders such as anxiety and depression, and difficult medical cases with her emphasis on integrative internal medicine.

Christine Sagan, FNP—Christine joins Avante Medical Center as a family nurse practitioner focusing on whole body health for the entire family utilizing both conventional and alternative therapies.

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