

## Your Patients' Best Health Resource

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There is nothing as powerful as information. The right information has [won wars](#), saved lives and changed hearts; lack of information has led to hesitation, poor decisions and unintended consequences.

I often find myself in conversations with friends and relatives about their health. Most of these conversations revolve around their desire for more information / details relative to health challenges they are facing. They are not necessarily looking for care; they are looking for answers. Most conversations include a question along these lines:

- "Should I change my diet?"
- "Do I need to take vitamins and if so, which ones?"
- "What should I be doing in terms of exercise to stay fit?"
- "Can chiropractic do something about my headaches?"

One topic that keeps coming up is nutrition, particularly whether they're getting adequate nutrition from the foods they eat. They want to be sure there isn't some type of deficiency and many are considering a lab test that may reveal it. For one person, it was a concern about whether they were getting enough vitamin D; for another, it was a discussion about low testosterone.

Just last week, someone asked me about getting a lab test done to see if their lack of energy is somehow related to their nutritional intake. This person is taking vitamins and has enjoyed chiropractic care most of their life, but didn't know who to ask about getting the answers they need.

I actually got my own lab test last year. It was an interesting experience in self-care. An online company located in Louisiana had the lowest rate for the test I wanted, so I used them. When asked for the name of my medical doctor, I left the field blank, as I don't have one. (Why should I?) My account was automatically assigned a physician by the name of "Tenpenny." Don't know who they are or even where they live; they just appeared on my paperwork for the lab visit.

My blood was drawn by a lab two blocks from work. The results were sent to the Louisiana lab company, which placed the report in my online account a few days later. The report was easy to read and stayed in my online account for future reference.

There are, of course, state regulations that may impact your ability to encourage your patients to get a lab or other tests, help them read the results and recommend appropriate supplements or other courses of care. (Hopefully, this goes without saying, but just in case...)

The Internet age allows us to instantly know things we couldn't ever find out just a few decades ago. Consumers have come to expect immediate answers. Their universal question is, who can give them those answers?

While it may be a little outside of your comfort zone, you may want to look into the process of lab testing and other forms of testing your patients may be interested in. This can be particularly effective for potential nutritional issues. A number of companies work directly with DCs and their patients.

You may even want to spend a few dollars and have yourself tested (a [vitamin D test](#) is less than \$60, for example), if for no other reason than to help you understand the process and see the value for your patients.

Your patients have questions about their health they may not be asking you. Helping them see you as a resource will give you opportunities to have meaningful discussions about the chiropractic approach to health vs. the medical approach. It also could lead to referrals.

Something as simple as an "Ask the Doctor" page on your website will let patients and others ask questions and get answers. Leaving the posts up will show site visitors how knowledgeable you are. If you don't get any questions at first, post your own. Just remember to keep the inquirers anonymous and place a "for information only; not intended as advice or recommendation" disclaimer at the top of the page.

You may not have all of the answers to your patients' questions, but that's OK. You can still be instrumental in helping patients and the people in your community get the information they need. In doing so, you'll reinforce your credibility as a doctor of chiropractic and health care expert.

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