

What happens when you see the doctor

You've got some kind of physical or mental complaint and go to your doctor. What happens?

He'll very likely prescribe a drug, one that has side effects and in many cases could be worse than the illness. Sure, if you have an infection, you need an antibiotic. If you have a broken bone, you need painkillers (and more). Many conditions exist for which modern medicine literally saves lives.

What about if you have high blood pressure? This is a condition which lifestyle factors are important. But does any doctor prescribe diet? No, not a one, or at least as statistically close to zero as you could want. And even if they did, they don't know what to prescribe. In many cases, they're just as out of shape as their patients. No, you'll get a pill, which has serious side effects.

In doctors' defense, precious few of their patients will do anything to help themselves beyond popping a pill. So even were they so inclined, they don't discuss lifestyle factors – diet, exercise, sleep – or OTC supplements.

What if you're depressed? Medication can be of value, but these do have real and serious side effects, including possible long-term effects on the brain or perhaps a little suicidal ideation. However, they're a doctor's first resort. Exercise, magnesium, light therapy, n-acetylcysteine, even sleep deprivation therapy, all these can combat depression, and doctors are either ignorant of them or won't bother telling patients about them. Mostly the former, I think.

What if you have fatigue? This is possibly the number one symptom that patients tell doctors about. If the doctor discovers that his patient isn't sleeping well, he'll prescribe a sleeping pill, paying no attention to the coffee the patient drinks all afternoon that prevents him from sleeping. Again: diet, exercise, OTC supplements? No.

Feeling a little fuzzy in the head? Forget all the sugar you ingest and your lack of sleep. What you need is speed.