

Guide to the Ethical Conduct of Naturopathic Doctors

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Primary Purpose

The Naturopathic Doctor's primary purpose is to prevent disease, to promote health, and to restore, maintain and optimize health and well-being through individualized patient care and public education.

Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

The Naturopathic Doctor will practice the art, science and spirit of the profession to the best of his/her ability and judgment following these principles of naturopathic medicine.

1. The Naturopathic Doctor shall endeavor to first, do no harm; to provide the most effective health care available with the least risk to his/her patients at all times (Primum Non Nocere).
2. The Naturopathic Doctor shall recognize, respect and promote the self-healing power of nature inherent in each individual human being. (Vis Medicatrix Naturae).
3. The Naturopathic Doctor shall strive to identify and remove the causes of illness, rather than to eliminate or suppress symptoms (Tolle Causum).
4. The Naturopathic Doctor shall educate his/her patients, inspire rational hope and encourage self-responsibility for health (Doctor as Teacher).
5. The Naturopathic Doctor shall treat each person by considering all individual health factors and influences. (Treat the Whole Person).
6. The Naturopathic Doctor shall emphasize the condition of health to promote well-being and to prevent diseases for the individual, each community and our world. (Health Promotion, the Best Prevention)

Responsibilities to the Patient

The Naturopathic Doctor:

1. will practice in a manner that is above reproach and will take neither physical, emotional nor financial advantage of the patient.
2. shall maintain competence in naturopathic medicine and strive for professional excellence through constant assessment of personal strengths, limitations and effectiveness and by the advancement of professional knowledge.

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3. will recognize his/her professional limitations and when indicated recommend to the patient that additional opinions and/or services be obtained.
4. will agree that a patient has the right to accept or reject any health care recommended.
5. shall safeguard a patient's right to privacy and only disclose confidential information when either authorized by the patient or mandated to do so by law.
6. will ensure, when acting on behalf of a third party, that the patient understands the naturopathic doctor's legal responsibilities to the third party before proceeding with the examination.
7. will recommend only diagnostic procedures and treatment that is believed necessary for the well-being of the patient. The naturopathic doctor will exchange such information concerning these findings that is necessary for the patient to reach a decision.
8. will, upon a patient's request, supply the information that is required to enable a patient to receive any benefits to which the patient may be entitled.
9. will be considerate of the anxiety of the patient's next-of-kin and cooperate with them in the patient's interest.
10. will recognize the responsibility of a naturopathic doctor to render care to any person regardless of colour, religion, sexual orientation or political belief.
11. shall, except in an emergency or as required by law, have the right to refuse to accept a patient.
12. will render all possible assistance to any patient where an urgent need for naturopathic care exists.
13. will when the patient is unable to give consent and an agent of the patient is not available to give consent render such therapy, as the naturopathic doctor believes to be in the patient's best interest.
14. will, if absent, ensure the availability of care to his/her patients if possible.
15. will, once having accepted a patient, continue to provide services until they are no longer required or until arrangements have been made for the services of another suitable practitioner.
16. may withdraw from the responsibility for the care of a patient provided that the patient is given adequate notice of that intention.
17. will inform the patient when personal morality or religious conscience prevents the naturopathic doctor from recommending some forms of therapy.
18. will ensure, before initiating clinical research involving humans, that proper recognized ethical protocol is followed.

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19. will consider, in determining professional fees both the nature of the service provided and the ability of the patient to pay, and will be prepared to discuss the fee with the patient.

Responsibilities to the Profession

The Naturopathic Doctor:

1. will recognize that the profession demands integrity and dedication from all its members.
2. will strive to participate in professional activities at the national, provincial and local level in order to advance the standards of care, the body of knowledge and the public awareness of naturopathic medicine.
3. will recognize that self-discipline of the profession is a privilege and that each practitioner has a continuing responsibility to merit the retention of that privilege.
4. will behave in a way beyond reproach and will report to the appropriate professional body any conduct of a colleague which might generally be considered unbecoming to the profession.
5. will enter into a contract with an organization only if it will allow maintenance of professional integrity.
6. will only offer to a colleague a contract which has terms and conditions equitable to both parties.
7. will recognize a responsibility to give the generally held opinions of the profession when interpreting knowledge of a scientific nature to the public.
8. will, when professing an opinion which is contrary to the generally held opinion of the profession, so indicate and will avoid any attempt to enhance his/her own professional reputation.
9. will build a professional reputation based on ability and integrity and will only advertise professional services or make professional announcements as permitted by legislation or by the provincial naturopathic licensing authority.
10. will avoid advocacy of any product when identified as a member of the naturopathic medical profession.
11. will avoid the use of secret remedies.
12. will request the opinion of an appropriate practitioner acceptable to the patient when diagnosis or treatment is difficult or obscure or when the patient requests it.
13. will, having requested the opinion of a colleague, make available all relevant information and providing the patient consents indicate clearly if the consultant is to continue with the care of the patient.

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14. will co-operate with those individuals who in the opinion of the naturopathic doctor may assist in the care of the patient.
15. will make available to appropriate practitioners, upon the request of the patient a report of pertinent findings and treatment of the patient.

Responsibilities to Society

The Naturopathic Doctor:

1. will strive to improve the standards of medical care and promote health and safety for the individual, the public and the global community.
2. will recognize the responsibility as a witness to assist the court in arriving at a just decision.

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