

Should You Use That Remedy For That Ailment?

Description

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Occasionally, I'm asked what I think about using some particular remedy for some particular ailment. In such cases, my main goal is to help the questioner understand the principles of "the health message." Starting in 1863, Ellen White and [other messengers](#) have had a message to bear regarding health. Unfortunately, many (perhaps even most) have greatly misunderstood the health message, thinking that it entails some form of "alternative medicine" or that it should lead people to discard at least some of modern scientific medicine. This couldn't be further from the truth. So, here are some of the fundamental principles I find myself often endeavoring to communicate:

The health message recommends [science-based medicine](#) and warns against alternative medicine. Many have the mistaken idea that God's appointed methods of healing consist of so-called "natural remedies," essential oils, supplements, energy healing, etc. And most often, the way these methods are legitimized is by reference to personal experience. Someone tries something, thinks it helped them, then they recommend it to others. Or people recommend what they heard helped others. Ellen White explicitly counseled against this way of drawing medical conclusions in a testimony called [Experience Not Reliable in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, starting on page 67](#).

What the health message teaches is that the heaven-ordained method of verifying which medical treatments work and which do not is rigorous science and going with the best health authorities of today (again, read [Experience Not Reliable](#)). The genuine health authorities are not friends, family, naturopaths, homeopaths, chiropractors, or anyone who promotes unfounded medical ideas like reiki, acupuncture, aromatherapy, or the countless so-called miracle plants and supplements. The true health authorities are those who advocate science-based medicine and are experts in genuine medical sciences like virology, cardiology, oncology, immunology, neurology, etc.

Again, the health message recommends against using alternative medicine therapies and also against following the advice of non-experts, even if they are friends, and even if they have testimonials in favor of some product or method. Instead, it recommends following professional medical advice from real experts. Of course, individual doctors can be wrong and plenty of doctors and institutions fall short of true science-based practice. This is why it is important to become informed as to what true science-based medicine is like and to do your best to find doctors who use the best practices. In general, so long as someone is a real doctor at a real medical institution, most of what they recommend will be grounded in science nowadays. But if your doctor (or anyone else for that matter) starts recommending non-science-based things, like alternative-medicine therapies, or if they start speaking against established science like vaccines, it should raise red flags and you should seek [better sources of health information](#). Mainstream medicine

isn't perfect, but what is wrong with it isn't its dissimilarity to alternative medicine; it is its similarity to alternative medicine. The solution to this is more scientific rigor, not less. We should hold personal experience in lower esteem, not higher esteem. And we shouldn't fall prey to conspiratorial thinking or to the idea that so-called "natural remedies" are better by virtue of being "natural."

Lastly, if you have an ailment, we recommend for you to not look for evidence for a particular remedy you may have in mind. Instead, simply find out what science-based experts have shown to be a safe and effective treatment for your condition. Talk to your doctor, let them know that you want science-based medicine, and listen to them with a recognition of the fact that they know much more about health and disease than you do. Don't assume that you know what your ailment is or that you know the proper treatment. Get a real diagnosis using scientifically founded diagnostic methods and then follow the treatment your physician recommends.