

[IMAGE]

## Cell Health: An Interview With Dr. Greg Barsten

By G. Douglas Andersen, DC, DACBSP, CCN

In my humble opinion, Greg Barsten, DC, MS, is one of the chiropractic profession's top nutritionists. He earned his chiropractic degree from Palmer College of Chiropractic- West and a master's degree in human nutrition from the University of Bridgeport. He has board certifications in clinical nutrition, sports medicine and emergency medicine (EMT), and is a registered herbalist (RH) through the American Herbalists Guild. He has taught numerous clinical nutrition and functional medicine seminars for various organizations since 1993. In addition to his general chiropractic and nutrition practice, he was the chief nutrition consultant for the Cancer Support and Education Center for more than 12 years.

Greg just wrote an e-book on nutrition titled *Supercharge Your Cell Vitality*. It is a short and concise summary on how the general population can improve their health and vitality by reducing cellular inflammation and maximizing nutrition for modern times.

*What's the most important point you're trying to make in your e-book when it comes to nutrition and the modern diet?* I wrote the book mainly for patients and educated consumers who are tired of wading through endless books, Internet opinions, newsletters, infomercials, etc. Most people wind up more confused than when they started. Plus, there's a tendency to get caught up in the "magic pill or potion," instead of focusing on fundamentals. Most of the content is really timeless principles; however, what I really wanted to drive home is the fact that people are sicker today than ever before with chronic conditions. The root of these are based in cellular inflammation. Get rid of the chronic cellular inflammatory cascade that's perpetuated by diet, and many conditions will heal on their own.

*We are in what I call the "anti-carb era," with carbs getting the same "root of all evil" treatment fats and protein previously went through. Do you think carbs will enjoy the same rehabilitation protein / fat eventually received?* Great question. First, I don't think the fat re-education is done yet. Ask the average person about fat and most still think it's the devil. Most nutrition-savvy docs know better, but it's still an uphill education battle to reprogram the damage Madison Avenue and the food industry created over the past 30 years or more in terms of consumer awareness and truth.

The low-fat experiment was a bust by most accounts, and now emerging studies are proving it. A great cover article was published on June 18, 2014 in *Time* magazine by Bryan Walsh, titled "Eat Butter." It tells a lot about the whole saga. Fat can be our best friend or worst enemy, depending on the source, how it's processed, how we use it, and how much we ingest. Carbs are the same. I think carb education is the next frontier of nutrition education.

In my book, I discuss that the real villain isn't "carbs," but the types and amounts. The average modern diet still involves excessive refined or processed carb consumption. This drives inflammatory signaling, which decimates health on nearly every level. Insulin resistance is just one example. We now face escalating epidemics of diabetes, autoimmune conditions, cancer, and other conditions. A common denominator here is cell inflammation. Excessive or "wrong" carbs contribute to this, so it's imperative to reduce cell inflammation where we can and eat a less-processed, whole-food-based diet.

*Do you think the public is better informed or more confused about nutrition compared to the "4 food group" days when you started your practice?* It's a mix. Today, consumers and health professionals understand more academic info about foods than years ago, but they still can't seem to connect the dots. For example, many people understand "trans fats" and "white bread" may not be ideal foods anymore, and that olive oil is a "healthy fat." Then there's a qualitative drop-off in terms of what we actually eat, simply because mainstream education is often behind the curve of new evidence and common sense; especially if there's little financial gain from the giant food industry, which unfortunately drives public awareness.

*In chiropractic school I was taught that mainstream medicine had a anti-supplement bias. After practicing for many years, I would grade that generalization as fair. Conversely, an equally fair generalization I was not taught, but have observed, is a pro-supplement bias by alternative medicine. Care to comment?* I agree. Part of this is simple: follow the money. The nutrition supplement industry is exploding, and numerous companies are fighting for a piece of the pie. We're also a lazy society. It's easier for most to take a pill, whether it's a nutrient or a drug, to help what ails us, instead of doing the real work of diet. The responsibility of diet change is not an easy shoe to wear for many because it's inconvenient and messes with our "comfort zone." Add the fact that diet changes often take time to see the benefits, and most people drop the ball or never enter the game.

*You recommend products from a number of brands you've had success with over the years. I was taught that when supplements fail, it's probably the wrong brand. Your nutrition practice is like mine in that the*

*referrals you get are what I call the "last resort" types who are already using supplements, but not getting satisfactory results. What I have observed is that when supplements fail, it's usually the wrong dosing followed by the wrong product.* I often find dosing a problem, too. Some just aren't taking enough to accomplish much of anything. Are there quality differences in the supplement market? Absolutely. However, many docs are quick to divert patients to their products. This is often due to false marketing by suppliers, manipulated science / data, or profit. But I think the biggest reason supplements don't help is that the products are not specific for their problem.

An example is a patient who came to me with 10-year history of progressively worsening arthritis. She had negative autoimmune blood markers, and her rheumatologist had told her it was mild osteoarthritis. She refused any Rx meds. Her general pain level was a "7-8" out of 10 on most days.

After a thorough history, exam and review of lab, she pulled out a bag full of glucosamine / chondroitin / MSM caps, fish oil, vitamin D, calcium / magnesium, a generic once-daily multi, astaxanthin, and turmeric. She was taking one cap a day of everything. She wanted to know which products she should throw away and/or buy different ones.

I ran a few tests and found she had serious food allergies and increased intestinal permeability. I placed her on a hypoallergenic diet and an intestinal repair formulation for one month. I told her to continue what she was taking. After one month, she reported her pain to now be a "2-3" only on her worst days. She was also dancing and doing senior aerobics because she felt so good. I told her to increase her joint nutrients by two caps a day. Last week, she emailed to tell us her pain was now virtually gone.

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