



CLICK FOR HOLIDAY SHIPPING DEADLINES

gift registry

catalog quick shop

online print catalogs

eGift certificates

Home [Customer Service](#) [Your Account](#) [Cart](#) >> [Item\(s\)](#)

FITNESS HEALTH HOME ECO-LIVING SPIRIT COMMUNITY PRODUCTS GLOSSARY

[PRINTER FRIENDLY](#)

[▶ EMAIL TO A FRIEND](#)



## The Whole Picture of Health

by [Georgianna Donadio M.Sc., Ph.D.](#)

Do you ever wonder why, in spite of all your good intentions, you fail to take control over your health and wellness the way you really want to?

The problem is that most of us do not approach our health in the right way. We often pay attention to our physical symptoms and treat them as they arise, but the physical aspect of health is only one of five essential aspects that contribute to the way we feel. The Whole Health Education approach, a tool for personal health management, provides individualized health information that explains not just the physical, but also the emotional, nutritional, environmental and even spiritual aspects of various health concerns.

For instance, Mature Onset Diabetes affects approximately 18.2 million Americans and is one of the leading health concerns in our society today. As all chronic conditions are, Mature Onset Diabetes is a multi-dimensional condition. By looking at chronic diseases such as diabetes from the Whole Health Education perspective, we can learn ways to restore and maintain our health.

### Physical/Structural

For individuals with Mature Onset Diabetes specialized beta cells of the pancreas, which produce insulin, become incapable of producing adequate amounts of this critically necessary hormone. This tends to develop over time, by eating large amounts of insulin-provoking foods. These insulin provocateurs, which are sugars and starches in the form of complex carbohydrates, require the pancreas to produce more insulin so that the sugars can be carried over the cell membranes in all parts of the body.

Serious disturbances occur when we do not have enough insulin to carry the sugar over the cell membranes. Insulin hooks onto the sugar molecule and acts like a lock and key mechanism to bring that sugar into the cell which is then used in the energy cycle of cell metabolism. The nervous system, brain and the lungs cannot function without the

### Recommended I



[Solace CD](#)



[Sleep Soothe](#)



[Reflexology Gi](#)



[Stress Relief Yoga For DVD](#)



[Real-EASE Relax](#)

proper metabolism of sugars.

### Emotional/Social

Current bio-behavioral research demonstrates a direct relationship between what our body is doing chemically and how we are feeling emotionally. Just as diabetes is an indication of the lack of appropriate and balanced nourishment on a chemical/nutritional level, it is also an indication of the lack of emotional nourishment on the psychological level. We know this because of the dynamic relationship between carbohydrates, overeating and a chemical our body produces called serotonin. Complex starchy carbohydrates and overeating provoke the production of serotonin in the body. Serotonin is a neuro-transmitter that provides, in the brain, a feeling of well being. The pancreas is one of the hardest working organs in our body, and is the "end organ" of digestion, providing numerous enzymes and hormones that allow us to "take in" the outside world on a very cellular level. You can think of the pancreas as a metaphor for our relationship with others and the world around us, as it literally allows us to take in, integrate and nourish ourselves from the macro to the micro level.

Often when we build our diet around starchy complex carbohydrates, or find ourselves craving them, this can be a way to "self-medicate" our emotional needs by eating foods that lead to increased serotonin levels with accompanying increased insulin production. This might arise as a compensation for a lack of loving relationships and a desire or need for approval and acceptance. What is clear, regardless of the emotional motivation, is that physically, over time excess consumption of starchy complex carbohydrates and overeating can result in a an overworked pancreas. This can lead to hypoglycemia, low blood sugar or hyperglycemia, high blood sugar. Paradoxically, if we are feeling the ups and downs of hypoglycemia or hyperglycemia with the corresponding biochemical and neurological symptoms, this may produce feelings of anxiety or apprehension and become a physical problem that undermines our emotional sense of well being, security and self-esteem. When our feelings are dealt with by "medicating" with serotonin producing foods, we are simply treating the symptoms. This masks the underlying cause and allows the feeling/feeding cycle to continue.

### Chemical/Nutritional

On the nutritional side, the treatment for people with Mature Onset Diabetes is to decrease the stress on the pancreas by making changes in the diet — decrease starches and sugars and decrease calories. A diet consisting of lots of vegetables combined with lean proteins such as fish, chicken, (for the vegetarian eggs or soy products), water, fruit and necessary, healthy fats is the best diet for those with diabetes and those seeking to prevent its development. For individuals who experience hypo or hyper glycemia, it is wise not to eat grain or sugar,



[Silk Sleep M](#)



[Padded Meditac](#)



[Meditation for Begi](#)



[Qigong For Stress](#)



[Relaxation CD](#)

which provoke an insulin response, but rather consume sprouted grain products, which converts the grain glutens and non-digestible plant sugars into digestible amino acids and maltose.

### **Environmental/Internal & External**

The environments that we work in, live in, walk through and live near have an impact on the way that we feel in our bodies and how we feel about ourselves. Dr Abraham Maslow brilliantly pointed out that human beings are herd animals — interdependent beings who seek the safety and comfort of the tribe. Belonging, being a part of a family, work or faith community are important needs of all human beings. When we are living or working in environments that do not value us, do not reflect back to us our contribution, or embrace us as belonging to the group, we suffer from alienation and a sense of loss which in turn often leads to self-soothing behaviors such as starchy carbohydrate over consumption, smoking, drugs or alcohol abuse.

Our internal environments are both physical and emotional. When we physically slow down and listen to what our body's internal dialogue is telling our conscious self, we know when we have eaten too much or too little of the wrong foods, when we need to rest, relax and take time for self-care. When we choose to ask questions about what might be the unconscious cause of our response to stimuli which may upset or hurts us, we can more fully understand our own internal emotional environment and process this information to liberate unwanted unconscious conditioning.

### **Spiritual / World View**

The renowned anthropologist and writer, Joseph Campbell, stated that "all human beings have three essential questions they seek answers to: Why am I here? What is the purpose of my life and Where do I go when I die?" Our attempts to answer these questions form our worldview, our spirituality or faith in the unknown. Faith requires trust in the unseen and provides us with a tool that puts order to our universe and allows us to formulate purpose and meaning for our lives.

Various ancient spiritual teachings suggest we can achieve trust in the mysterious order of the universe through behaviors, which come from trusting the order of the universe that is within ourselves. We do this by setting boundaries — codes of conduct regarding how we are going to behave, eat, work, exercise and live. If we do not violate our own boundaries, we are less likely to violate other's boundaries or to let anyone else violate ours. Krishna's ancient dictum: "The best way to help mankind is through the perfection of yourself", gives us insight into how we can heal the world when we heal ourselves. It is said that there is only one disease, the disease that comes from separating oneself from the awareness that we are one tribe, one family. When we lose our connectedness to one another competition becomes

commonplace. Competition creates isolation, and isolation can lead to the formation of diseases like diabetes.

By understanding our health concerns and conditions from a multi-dimensional perspective, we can become our own best friend and our own personal healer. The Whole Health Education approach allows each of us to experience whole-person health care through our own filters and in a way that is compatible with our authentic self. In this model, we become the center of our health and healing process, and can learn ways to heal ourselves more fully.

**About the Author:**

**Georgianna Donadio M.Sc., Ph.D.**

*Georgianna Donadio M.Sc., Ph.D., has conducted a private practice in Whole Person Health Care since 1976. She is the Founder and Director of The National Institute of Whole health, the pioneer of Whole Health Education and a provider of patient and healthcare professional education since 1977. For more information, visit [www.niwh.org](http://www.niwh.org) or call 1-888-354-HEAL (4325).*

**Recommended Products**

- [Solace CD](#)
- [Sleep Soother Kit](#)
- [Reflexology Gift Set](#)
- [Stress Relief Yoga For Beginners DVD](#)
- [Real-EASE Relaxation Tool](#)
- [Silk Sleep Mask](#)
- [Padded Meditation Bench](#)
- [Meditation for Beginners DVD](#)
- [Qigong For Stress Relief DVD](#)
- [Relaxation CD Set](#)

**CORPORATE INFORMATION**

- [About Gaiam](#)
- [Corporate Site](#)
- [SEC Filings](#)
- [Press Releases](#)
- [Earnings Releases](#)

**QUICK LINKS**

- [Online Catalog](#)
- [eGift Certificates](#)
- [Customer Relations](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Your Account](#)
- [Catalog Quickshop](#)
- [Gaiam Gift Registry](#)
- [Submit Testimonial](#)

**SITE INFORMATION**

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [E-mail Signup](#)
- [Shipping & Handling](#)
- [Affiliate Information](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)

**OTHER GAIAM S**

- [Corporate Site](#)
- [Eco Travel](#)
- [International Site](#)
- [Gaiam Flowers](#)
- [Residential Solar](#)



Copyright 2005 Gaiam.com, Inc.