



Dr. David Brownstein's

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Migraines, Depression, Anxiety — Could Special Eyeglasses Be the Cure?

I met my wife, Allison, at the University of Michigan during our freshmen orientation. For me, it was love at first sight. (It took a little longer for her to realize what a catch I was!) When we were dating, I found some of Allison's mannerisms humorous. For instance, when we were students, we walked everywhere. I used to make fun of Allison because she could not cross a road.

What I mean by that is that she could never decide when a car was far enough away to begin crossing. Her depth perception was so poor that she could not judge when it was safe. She was always pulling me back to the curb when an oncoming car clearly was far enough away.

Allison also hated to walk downhill or even down an incline. She always held on to me tightly if we had to do so. She had the feeling she was going to fall. I never understood how anyone could walk uphill without a problem but not downhill.

At the time, my friends and I found these mannerisms funny. I made sure Allison knew that I thought it was funny. (Somehow, she couldn't see my humor in this.) Of course, looking back on things, I feel a little guilty. Then, as she got older, Allison began to suffer from headaches as well as neck and shoulder pains. She saw many different doctors and chiropractors. Though chiropractic treatment did help, she was having headaches and neck pain nearly every day.

Allison sought relief from many types of healthcare providers: neurologists, osteopaths, physical therapists, and massage therapists. She

didn't get much help from any therapy. And she continually took nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, although they provided minimal relief.

Our chiropractor, Dr. Robert Radtke (his practice is in Birmingham, Mich.) felt that her neck and head pains were more than a structural problem. He thought Allison had a problem with her eyes, that is, that her eyes were not working together to focus on a line of sight. He recommended an eye specialist who could detect these problems.

The eye specialist that we saw was Debby Feinberg, O.D. Dr. Feinberg diagnosed Allison with vertical heterophoria (VH) and prescribed special prism lenses. These lenses have changed Allison's life dramatically for the better and have virtually eliminated her headaches and neck pain.

It's more than a simple visit to the eye doctor. People with a host of unexplained problems, including anxiety, might be suffering instead from an

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illness that can be cured with the right diagnosis and a pair of specially designed eyeglasses.

An estimated 5 percent of the population suffers from VH. However, my experience shows these estimates are too low. Many of these potential victims have been searching diligently for a cause and cure to their problems.

In their search, they may have received one or more of several unrelated diagnoses, including migraine headaches, sinusitis, fibromyalgia, anxiety, depression, ADD/ADHD, and learning disability.

That's not to say these problems aren't real, but an untrained practitioner can mistake them for the simpler problem of VH. These same patients have been prescribed medications, including powerful anti-anxiety, antidepressant, and anti-seizure medications. Unfortunately, these medications do not treat the underlying cause of the illness and provide the patient minimal or no symptomatic relief. Some of these drugs actually impair recovery.

Dr. Feinberg has found that these patients have to detoxify from medications first, before she can accurately diagnose them and treat them appropriately. Although the data is far from clear, out of 100 anxiety patients filling out a questionnaire, 40 percent answered the questionnaire in a manner that would indicate they are suffering from VH, not anxiety alone.

It is not only anti-anxiety medications that interfere with the diagnosis and treatment of VH. The most common antidepressant medications — selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, such as Celexa, Lexapro, Luvox, Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft, as well as beta blockers, anti-epileptics, antipsychotics, and narcotics — interfere with vision function. These medications can cause or worsen VH symptoms.

Some symptoms commonly associated with VH

include poor night vision, eye strain, difficulty with reading and reading comprehension, fatigue with reading, as well as using a line guide (say, your finger, a ruler, or an envelope) while reading.

Take this simple quiz to see whether you might suffer from VH:

- Do you have headaches or facial pain?
- Do you have unexplained neck or shoulder discomfort?
- Are you frequently dizzy or lightheaded?
- Do you feel unsteady while walking or drift to the side when walking?
- Do you have anxiety when going into a large department store or in a crowd?
- Does riding in a car (especially the back seat) make you feel dizzy or uncomfortable?
- Is it difficult to walk down a hill?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, the answer could be VH, and it can be treated. A common symptom of VH patients is anxiety. Conventional medicine treats anxiety with anti-anxiety medications and antidepressant medications. These medications may give some symptom relief, but they do not treat the underlying cause of anxiety.

A Slight Difference That Alters Your Vision

To understand VH, you have to understand the concept of fusion. Fusion is the process by which a single image is perceived by the two separate eye images. These images are integrated (or fused) by the brain into a single image.

In other words, each eye looks directly at an object and projects the image to the visual center of the brain (occipital cortex), where it is processed (or fused) into a single image.

If everything is functioning appropriately with the

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eyes, our brain is able to process exactly what we are looking at. However, if the eyes are out of alignment (even slightly), the images will be distorted, making the brain unable to fuse the object into a single image. The end result is a blurred or doubled vision.

VH describes a visual condition in which the eyes are slightly out of alignment vertically — one eye points slightly higher than the other. In other words, the line of sight from one eye is slightly higher than the line of sight from the other eye.

In the case of VH, then, the eyes do not line up straight. Many people are able to compensate for this misalignment and maintain fusion by activating certain eye muscles to raise and lower the eyes slightly. However, in some people, the eye muscles become fatigued and strained, making it difficult to maintain fusion and causing the symptoms of VH.

Another way people try to compensate for VH and to maintain fusion is to tilt the head. In essence, the head is tilted one way to raise one eye slightly in order to help realign the images and maintain fusion. Over time, this can lead to fatigue and strain of the neck muscles; head, neck, and shoulder pain can result from a head tilt.

Many ophthalmologists and optometrists (and most other healthcare providers) frequently miss the diagnosis of VH. Most optometrists and ophthalmologists are taught that minimal misalignment of the eyes is not a problem. However, my wife and many of my patients (as well as those suffering from VH) would disagree strongly with this statement.

VH is not a new condition. It was first described in 1883 as associated with dizziness, anxiety, fear of walking in crowds, and a tilted head posture.¹ Over the years, there has been little mention of VH in the ophthalmologic or optometric research. However, as our modern lifestyle has evolved into more and more close-up work (such as reading and computer work), VH may be occurring at an increased rate. Most of my patients with VH complain of headaches and dizziness, as well as neck and shoulder pain, with prolonged computer work.

A constant complaint that VH patients state is a feeling of dizziness or light-headedness in the car, especially as a passenger in the back seat. Also, VH patients generally have poor depth perception.

Because I have become aware of VH, I have been screening my patients for this condition. Besides the previously mentioned symptoms, findings include a facial asymmetry with a head tilt. The facial asymmetry can be seen with one eye sitting a little lower than the other eye on the horizontal line.

Also, having patients walk down a hall can give clues to VH. Patients with VH usually will drift to one side when walking down a long hall.

Brain Injury Link to Your Eyesight

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) can occur from many different situations: motor vehicle accidents, falls, explosions, sporting events, and assault. It can result in headaches, balance problems, dizziness, visual disturbances, and anxiety. The symptoms of VH and TBI overlap. There is no question that many people with TBI suffer a prolonged course of their illness. This can include long-term therapy and medications. Sometimes these therapies can result in a significant improvement in symptoms while other times these treatments are minimally successful. Perhaps some of these TBI patients suffer from VH.

Let's go back to Allison's case. When Dr. Feinberg diagnosed Allison with VH, she asked Allison whether she had a brain injury. In fact, Allison had been diagnosed with a mild concussion when we

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David Brownstein, M.D., is a board-certified family physician and one of the foremost practitioners of holistic medicine. Dr. Brownstein has lectured internationally to physicians and others about his success with natural hormones and nutritional therapies in his practice. His books include *Drugs That Don't Work and Natural Therapies That Do!*; *Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It*; *Salt Your Way To Health*; *The Miracle of Natural Hormones*; *Overcoming Arthritis, Overcoming Thyroid Disorders*; *The Guide to a Gluten-Free Diet*; *The Guide to Healthy Eating*; and *The Guide to a Dairy-Free Diet*. He is the medical director of the Center for Holistic Medicine in West Bloomfield, Mich., where he lives with his wife, Allison, and their teenage daughters, Hailey and Jessica. For more information about Dr. Brownstein, please go to www.drbrownstein.com.

Beat Chronic Illness With Dietary Changes

In each issue, I will share with you the story of one of my patients and how simple alternative approaches sometimes can solve major health problems. Names and some details have been changed for privacy's sake, but the problems and their resolutions are real.

— Dr. David Brownstein

Maria, 14, had complained of lower abdominal pains and intermittent fevers since she was 9. Her mother, Randi, told me, "Up until 9 years old, everything was normal. She was a happy, healthy child."

Maria's symptoms consisted of sudden onset of fever — her temperature would elevate to between 100 and 103 degrees Fahrenheit. When Maria became feverish, she complained of abdominal pain and swollen joints. Occasionally she would have a rash below her knees.

When Maria had these attacks, her mother took her to the doctor. Randi said, "The doctor could not find much. She felt that Maria had a recurrent viral infection. However, both the doctor and I became concerned because these episodes were occurring about once per month. When Maria became ill, she would miss three or four days of school."

Between fever episodes, Maria felt normal. "When I am not sick, I can do anything," she said.

One constant complaint from Maria was diarrhea alternating with constipation. She frequently had loose stools but developed constant diarrhea around the time her feverish episodes began. When Maria was asymptomatic, however, she often was constipated.

After three years of intermittent fever-related symptoms, Maria was sent to a pediatric rheumatologist, who diagnosed her with familial Mediterranean fever (FMF), an inherited inflammatory disorder that occurs in people of Mediterranean origin, although it can affect any ethnic group.

The signs of symptoms of FMF are similar to what Maria was suffering from: sudden fevers, abdominal pain, recurrent chest pain, achy and swollen joints, constipation or diarrhea, and a rash on the legs.

There are serious complications, including amyloidosis, a condition in which a protein (amyloid) accumulates in the organs and causes organ failure. Other problems associated with FMF include kidney damage (nephrotic syndrome), infertility, and chronic arthritis. Besides the rash, there are not a lot of exam signs that point toward a diagnosis of FMF.

The diagnosis usually is ascertained by listening to the history of the recurrent febrile episodes (or a

genetic test). It can take years to diagnose properly.

FMF can be treated with an older anti-inflammatory medication known as colchicine, which works by reducing inflammation in the body. It may not be a cure, but it can provide some relief.

Maria was treated with colchicine. She had some relief, a little less pain and discomfort with the attacks, but she was still suffering from the disease. Bagels and milk were triggers for Maria. She was dutifully avoiding bagels and milk, but she was eating other dairy products, including cheese and yogurt.

When I saw Maria, she looked like a healthy 14-year-old girl. Of course, she was not febrile. (Remember, in between her febrile episodes, she is asymptomatic.) A physical exam showed Maria had whitish spots on her nails, which can be a sign of mineral deficiencies. I ordered blood work and a hair analysis.

Maria's blood work showed a very low red blood cell magnesium level. Also, red blood cell zinc levels were very low. Furthermore, her blood tests revealed a high level of casein antibodies. Casein is a protein in milk and dairy products. Elevated casein antibodies can indicate sensitivity or allergy to casein.

I treated Maria with a combination of magnesium (200 mg/day), zinc (50 mg/day), and a multivitamin that contained a full source of vitamins and minerals. Furthermore, I asked her to use buffered vitamin C powder — 1 scoop (3,000 mg) twice per day.

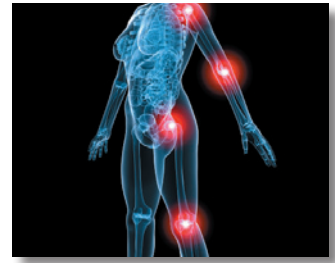
I also told Maria to avoid all dairy products. Whenever I see elevated casein antibodies, I tell my patients to stay away from dairy. Maria was not happy, but she agreed to go dairy-free for eight weeks.

Since Maria instituted the nutritional and dietary therapy, she has been symptom free. She used to have her FMF attacks every six to eight weeks. It has been more than seven months, and Maria has not had a single episode. She is playing field hockey for her school and has not missed a day of school.

"I feel like she has her life back," her mother told me. "She no longer misses school and just looks happier and less stressed. I am not sure what helped her the most — becoming dairy-free or the supplements — but something has definitely helped her. Right now, I could care less which therapy helped her. I have my baby back."

Providing the body with the raw materials it needs to function optimally can lead to wondrous things. Also, eliminating foods that are allergy-provoking can be markedly positive. Maria is just one of thousands of patients I have seen who is an example of this.

Are Your Knees, Hips, Neck or Back Constantly Hurting?



The Pain Solution That's Being Hailed as a Joint Health Miracle

Do you wake up with stiff, aching joints? Do you feel sore every time you move? That's no way to feel during what should be the best years of your life.

Most conventional doctors tell us to take prescription painkillers and over-the-counter drugs to relieve pain. If you listen to them, you would think that these medications are your only options and that they have few, if any side effects - but this is FAR from the truth!

The Dark Side of Pain Killing Medications

People often take painkillers at the first sign of pain, which is understandable since they offer quick relief. But painkillers do not cure aching hands or sore backs. What they do is mask the problem, and this comes with a high price! Before you take pain medications, here are some important facts you should know:

- "Properly prescribed" prescription and over-the-counter drugs kill more people each year than illegal drugs.
- Acetaminophen is #5 on the list of drugs associated with death from overdose, just behind morphine and oxycodone!
- Vioxx®, a prescription painkiller, was thought to be responsible for over 60,000 deaths before being banned.
- Recent research has shown that long-term use of ibuprofen actually makes your joints and cartilage weaker, not stronger.
- The government's own studies have proven that a natural alternative with no side effects is actually more effective than a leading prescription pain medication!

Breakthrough Government Findings

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) conducted a groundbreaking study that compared the effectiveness of Glucosamine and Chondroitin to the drug Celebrex®. The results revealed that when Glucosamine and Chondroitin are combined, they relieved severe knee pain in 80% of patients participating in the study, while Celebrex® worked in only 69% of cases!



Glucosamine and Chondroitin Are Not Enough

Scientists at the Institute for Joint Health Research, a division of *Stop Aging Now*, have spent years studying natural joint pain relief. They've discovered that long lasting benefits can only be obtained when a unique blend of 4 ingredients are combined at precise doses, including:

1. **Hyaluronic Acid (100 mg):** Creates "shock absorbing" synovial fluid around joints. Hyal-Joint™ is the most effective brand.

2. **Glucosamine (1,500 mg):** Helps prevent cartilage loss. GlucoSomex™ performs better than other types in studies.
3. **Chondroitin (1,200 mg):** Rapidly regenerates new cartilage. ChondroPure® is the purest variety and only brand made in the USA.
4. **MSM (1,000 mg):** Reduces painful inflammation. OptiMSM® is the most absorbable form.

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Most joint health products, unfortunately, contain subpar ingredients at ineffective doses. *Stop Aging Now* recognized that a truly effective joint health supplement was severely lacking in the marketplace, which is why they developed Super Osteo GOLD™. This natural, safe and effective formula is being hailed as a miracle for joint pain sufferers. Super Osteo GOLD contains a synergistic blend of 4 clinically proven ingredients, including GlucoSomex™ Glucosamine HCl, ChondroPure® Chondroitin, OptiMSM® MSM and Hyal-Joint™ Hyaluronic Acid. No other formula compares!

Helping Thousands Regain Their Lives

Beyond the proven effectiveness of this formula, Super Osteo GOLD is also extremely affordable. If you were to purchase each ingredient separately, you would pay well over \$83 per month, but Super Osteo GOLD is priced as low as \$19.95 per month!

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were freshmen at the University of Michigan. She had hit her head on a cinder-block wall. Dr. Feinberg reports that a significant number of her patients with VH have suffered a brain injury (sometimes major, sometimes minor) in the past. She believes that brain trauma can be the precursor to VH. Perhaps a small deviation in eye symmetry is not a problem for some unless there is a trauma to the head and brain. This trauma event may be “the straw that broke the camel’s back” and precipitate VH.

A recent paper studied 43 brain injury patients who were sent to a psychiatrist for standard medical treatments.² These patients had persistent post-concussive symptoms. They were referred to Dr. Feinberg and also were diagnosed with VH. Treatment with the appropriate glasses resulted in a 72 percent decrease in subjective symptoms compared to their own baselines. The authors commented in the study, “It appears that VH can be acquired from TBI.”

How is VH diagnosed? Dr. Feinberg developed a simple test. It is a 25-question symptom questionnaire. This questionnaire can be found at www.vsofb.com/VHQ on the Web. Dr. Feinberg’s office will score the questionnaire for you and contact you with the results.

Besides the symptoms questionnaire, seeing the appropriate eye doctor is a must for a proper diagnosis of VH. Unfortunately, most eye doctors are not well versed in the illness. They believe that minor differences in visual alignment do not need correction.

However, the results I have seen in my patients and my wife point out that minor differences in visual alignment do need correction in many individuals. It is important to work with an eye doctor who understands VH and is willing to try and

correct small misalignments in order to improve the health of the patient. How does this work?

First, the eye doctor should determine whether any standard vision corrections are needed in the patient; this includes nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism. Next, the doctor will perform the appropriate tests to assess for visual alignment. If there is misalignment, the doctor will fit the patient with a new prescription which includes prisms.

A prism is a transparent, triangular optical element with a flat, polished surface that refracts or bends the beam of light, moving the image being presented to the eye. The orientation of the prism dictates the direction the image is moved. In optometry, prisms have been used to treat diplopia (double vision) as well as fusion problems.

Prisms essentially shift corrective lenses off their axis — either raising or lowering the image presented to the eye. In the case of VH, the prism is oriented such that any vertical imbalance that is discovered during the examination is corrected. If one eye is slightly lower than the other eye, a prism can correct for that imbalance.

Steps Toward Better Vision, Better Health

In Dr. Feinberg’s office, once she makes the diagnosis of VH, she puts a trial frame on the patient. The trial frame contains a prism that corrects for misalignment. The results from the trial-framing can be instantaneous or immediate (within 20 minutes) improvement of dizziness, anxiety, headaches, or any other of the VH symptoms.

One big complaint Allison had was eye, head, and neck pain from working on the computer. Allison is my chief book seller. She takes the orders for my books, packages them, and takes them to the post office for mailing. Since she was complaining of eye strain and pain while on the computer, we shopped for the biggest monitor available (which I like!). But this did nothing to help her pain.

When Allison went to visit Dr. Feinberg, she was immediately diagnosed with VH. Dr. Feinberg placed a trial frame on Allison that contained a prism. Within minutes, Allison’s problem was resolved. “I always have a feeling of eye strain. I couldn’t believe

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In the News: Reading Between the Medical Headlines

Low Cholesterol and Increased Mortality

Researchers studied 517 heart attack patients who were admitted to a hospital between 1997 and 2000.

The patients were split into two groups: Those with LDL cholesterol of less than 105 mg/dl and those with LDL cholesterol greater than 105 mg/dl. There was no difference in age, gender, severity of coronary artery disease, and heart function. After three years, patients with the lower LDL levels had a 2.1 times higher rate of mortality (14.8 percent vs. 7.1 percent).

This is yet another study putting a nail in the coffin of the cholesterol = heart disease hypothesis. Recent recommendations claim that the best LDL cholesterol levels are below 70 mg/dl. This is ludicrous. Lower LDL cholesterol levels are associated with a host of serious ailments, including cancer and Parkinson's disease, even death. LDL cholesterol levels below 70 mg/dl are a recipe for disaster. More cholesterol information can be found in my book, *Drugs That Don't Work and Natural Therapies That Do*, 2nd Edition.

Antidepressants Useless in Mild and Moderate Depression

Antidepressant drugs' effectiveness was studied in mildly, moderately, and severely depressed patients. Compared with placebos, researchers found antidepressant medications virtually useless in mild and moderate depression. For severe depression, antidepressant drugs were more effective than placebo.¹

Antidepressant drugs are prescribed to many who do not need them. At least 27 million Americans now take

antidepressants, nearly double the number who did in the mid 1990s.

In severe depression, these drugs can be lifesaving. However, for the vast majority of individuals suffering from mild to moderate depression, antidepressant drugs have been shown to be of little value, being no better than a placebo. These drugs have major side effects, such as reduced libido to an increased risk of suicide. Exercise has been shown to be superior to antidepressants. My experience has shown that cleaning up the diet, detoxification, and nutritional support can be effective solutions.

Nonstick Chemicals and Thyroid Problems

British researchers have linked a chemical that is used in nonstick pans and water-resistant fabrics with thyroid disease.

The scientists found patients with high levels of the chemical perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in their blood had higher rates of thyroid disease. The researchers looked at nearly 4,000 American adults. Compared with those with the lowest concentrations, those with the highest PFOA amounts had a more than two times increased risk of thyroid disease.²

I have long advised my patients to avoid nonstick pans. These pans are coated with a known endocrine-disrupting chemical. Such chemicals block hormone receptors in the body and can create havoc. We are exposed to an increasing amount of endocrine-disrupting chemicals and we are paying the price for it: increased incidences of breast cancer, prostate cancer, and

ovarian cancer, as well as thyroid problems, are related to these toxic chemicals. Also, do not put stain-proofing chemicals on your carpets or clothes. Your health is more important than a stain.

Vitamin B6 May Carry Cardiovascular Influence

In a study, 1,205 Puerto Rican adults living in Massachusetts were examined in order to understand the relationship between vitamin B6 and inflammation. People with higher levels of activated vitamin B6 (pyridoxal-5'-phosphate) were found to have lower levels of inflammatory markers.

Higher vitamin B6 levels were associated with lower levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) — a marker of inflammation. Furthermore, higher vitamin B6 levels were also associated with lower levels of a marker for oxidative stress. Both markers have been related to heart disease. The authors of the study state, "Our data suggest that vitamin

B6 may influence cardiovascular disease . . ."³

Vitamin B6 deficiency is, unfortunately, common. I check B-vitamin levels

'We are paying the price for using nonstick pans.'

in any patient with a history or a family history of heart disease. This study indicates that lowered activated vitamin B6 levels via pyridoxal-5'-phosphate are related to elevated inflammatory markers. There is a wealth of information on the anti-inflammatory qualities of B6.

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it went away that quickly. As soon as I put on the trial frames, I knew my eyes felt better,” she said. Allison was fitted for the appropriate prism glasses.

Allison also could work on the computer for only a short time before she needed a break. “The eye strain would become too much for me. I kept having my eyes checked, but my former eye doctor kept telling me that my prescription was correct,” she said. Once Allison put the prism glasses on, the eye strain went away. “It is pretty amazing. If I wear the prisms, I don’t have pain. Within 10 minutes of looking at the computer screen without the prisms, I can begin to feel strain in my eyes,” she says.

Less Eye Strain, Fewer Drugs

Allison has been wearing prism glasses to correct VH for about a year. She (and I) can attest to how much better she is. She is not as tired, and her health definitely has improved. Allison also suffered from a long history of shoulder and neck pain. There is no question that VH can be related to shoulder and neck pain. Over the years, I recall Allison using a lot of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to lower her pain levels.

We were hoping that the prism glasses also would help that pain. Unfortunately, they did not help the shoulder and neck pain much. Although there was a slight decline in pain, Allison still suffered from the long-standing shoulder and neck discomfort. As previously mentioned, Allison had tried many different therapies to help with the pain — osteopathic manipulation, chiropractic, physical and massage therapy. One consistent therapy that she has maintained has been chiropractic.

The main treatment of chiropractic involves manual therapy — manipulation of the spine and other joints. Furthermore, chiropractic therapy can include lifestyle changes such as dietary and exercise regimens. I have been a big fan of chiropractors since I became involved with holistic medicine. I have learned a lot from chiropractors and believe that chiropractic should be a part of anyone’s holistic treatment program. Allison received chiropractic therapy before and after the prism glasses. Before the prism glasses, Allison would get little relief from

chiropractic visits. Sometimes the therapy would cause her more pain. She did not want to go back.

However, once the prism glasses were prescribed, I asked her to restart chiropractic therapy for her neck. I felt that now that her eyes were aligned, she might have a better result. Allison started with a chiropractor, Dr. Jeffrey Fantich (in West Bloomfield, Mich.), who does cranial sacral work. This is a gentle manipulation technique of the bones of the skull. After Dr. Fantich succeeded in lessening her head and neck pain with manipulation, he began to use gentle chiropractic techniques on Allison’s neck. It took Allison more than two years of Dr. Fantich’s work, but now she is virtually pain-free. I hardly ever see her in pain, and she takes almost no pain medications. It is nice to see my wife feeling better.

Start Your Treatment With the Right Doctors

I wrote this article to give hope to those suffering from a myriad of symptoms from which conventional medicine has little to offer: dizziness, anxiety, head and neck pain, poor depth perception, motion sickness, unsteadiness, eye strain and fatigue, head tilt, nausea, and brain fog. These symptoms may be related. They may signal VH. The good news is that a treatment is available that might be able to significantly help all of the listed symptoms — prism eye glasses.

As in Allison’s case, VH may not be the only underlying problem. You may need other healthcare disciplines — chiropractic, allopathic, osteopathic, massage, physical therapy, and acupuncture — to help you achieve your optimal health. Many times it “takes a village” to help integrate the right therapies that allow your body to optimally function.

The human body is a truly wondrous thing. We are designed to be happy, productive beings. Misalignment of the spine, joints, skull, extremities, and even the eyes can cause a wide range of serious problems in the body. Helping the body correct these misalignments can produce fabulous results; pain goes away and we are happier and more productive.

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- 2 To be published in *The American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* this year (2010)

Ask Dr. Brownstein

Dear Readers,

I will try to answer as many questions as I can. However, because of the volume of questions, I cannot answer each letter personally. Please include your full name, city, and state when submitting. If you have a question for me, please e-mail it to: askdrdavid@newsmax.com.

My sister is 34 and has been battling lupus and rheumatoid arthritis for well over three years. Her doctors are trying hard to find a solution for her. However, when they get one under control, the other flares up. She spent the whole month of November in one hospital or another. No one could help. All the medicines they have her on could easily fill a paper grocery bag. All her medications have side effects that can and have done more harm than good. She is always tired and in frequent pain. Do you have any recommendations I can take to her and her doctors?

— Elizabeth R., Eldora, N.J.

Your sister has two serious autoimmune conditions. Conventional medicine's approach to these illnesses frequently calls for very toxic drug therapies that can inhibit immune system functioning. However, if a thorough search for an underlying cause of autoimmune illness is not performed, then how can you formulate an effective treatment plan? My experience has shown clearly that all autoimmune disorder patients deserve a thorough work-up for an underlying infection. An underlying intracellular infection from a bacterium such as mycoplasma has been shown to disrupt normal immune system functioning and result in autoimmune disorders. Other conditions associated with autoimmunity include mercury toxicity. A holistic healthcare practitioner can help your

sister find the appropriate therapies for her unique condition. Finally, make sure she drinks enough water. Dehydration makes all autoimmune illnesses more difficult to treat. More information about a holistic approach to various arthritis disorders can be found in my book, *Overcoming Arthritis*.

I am having trouble getting Armour Thyroid. My doctor wants to prescribe Synthroid. Are there any natural alternatives to Armour Thyroid available?

— Stu S., Rockville, Md.

The maker of Armour Thyroid, Forest Pharmaceuticals, has not been clear on why there is such a shortage. This medication has been prescribed for nearly 80 years. Many patients have done very well with it. Armour Thyroid is a desiccated thyroid hormone derived from a porcine (pig) glandular source. It is unfortunate that many patients have suffered over the failure to obtain Armour Thyroid with very little information from Forest Pharmaceuticals. There is an alternative, natural desiccated thyroid hormone available. Two desiccated thyroid products, known as Westroid or Nature-Throid, are made at RLC Labs. These products come from the same source as Armour Thyroid. Most (over 90 percent) patients who were taking Armour Thyroid can substitute Westroid or Nature-Throid and feel well. For the small percent of patients who do not do well on these, it may become a trial-and-error process of trying different thyroid prescriptions until you find the product that works the best for you.

To your good health,



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