



## New Views on Epilepsy

When most people think of an epileptic seizure, they envision a person falling to the floor, twitching and jerking uncontrollably. However, this dramatic form of a seizure (generalized tonic-clonic) is only one type of epilepsy. There are many other forms that can manifest so subtly so as to go unnoticed.

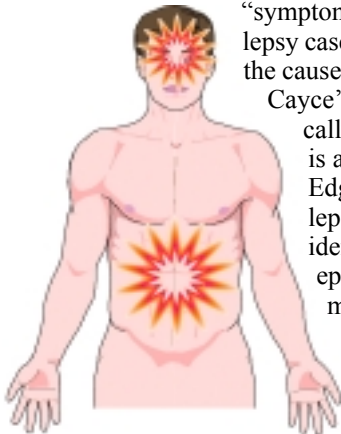
Epilepsy affects approximately 2.5 million Americans making it the most common neurological disorder. Epilepsy was first described in ancient Babylon over 3,000 years ago. The word epilepsy has its derivation from a Greek word meaning "attack." Historically, persons with epilepsy were often regarded as possessed – either by gods or demons.

### Causes and Treatment of Epilepsy

At a physiological level, epileptic seizures result from temporary changes in the electrical function of the brain that affect awareness, movement, or sensation. There are many causes of epilepsy ranging from heredity to illness or injury of the brain. When the cause has been clearly identified (such as brain injury resulting from an automobile accident), the epilepsy is called

"symptomatic." About two-thirds of epilepsy cases are called "idiopathic" meaning the cause is unknown. During Edgar Cayce's era, idiopathic epilepsy was called "pure" or "true" epilepsy. This is a very significant point because Edgar Cayce referred to "true" epilepsy in several readings wherein he identified the causes of idiopathic epilepsy that have eluded modern medical science.

From a mainstream medical perspective, epilepsy is an incurable condition. Although about 80 percent of epilepsy patients re-



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## The Power of Garlic



Garlic has been in the news a lot lately. This pungent little bulb that is a close relative of onions, scallions, chives, and shallots is more than just a culinary powerhouse.

The healing power of garlic has a long historical tradition. Garlic has been cultivated for at least 5,000 years. The early Egyptians ate it and used it as a medicine. Romans used garlic to treat asthma, suppress coughs, and expel intestinal parasites. Ancient Chinese physicians utilized garlic to reduce fevers and fight against intestinal parasites and dysentery.

Over the centuries, herbalists in many countries have used garlic as an antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immune-stimulant.

In the mid-nineteenth century, scientist Louis Pasteur noted the antibiotic properties of garlic when he put a small piece of the herb in a petri dish of bacteria, which it quickly killed. Scientific evidence supporting the role of garlic as a potent botanical medicine has accumulated since that time.

### Modern Research on Garlic

During the past twenty-five years, medical research has documented that garlic consumption reduces cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood while increasing lipoproteins (good cholesterol). Garlic tends to lower high blood pressure. Some studies even suggest that garlic may help prevent cancer and diabetes.

However, a recent major study, based on a comprehensive review of the medical literature, analyzed the potential medical value of garlic and concluded that the advocates for this strong-smelling herb may have overstated the case for its effectiveness. The report by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality calls for additional research to examine the short-term versus

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I received your newsletter *True Health*. The information presented therein is good. But I did *not* like your disclaimer which reads: “The information contained in this letter is intended for personal growth and development [up to here it is fine – the following appendage is redundant] and should not be considered as a guide to self-diagnosis or self-treatment. Please see your physician for any medical problem.” Therefore, you would do well to change your disclaimer to read: “The information presented in this newsletter or website is to liberate you. It is to make you realize that Health Care is Self Care and the Right to Health is the most fundamental right. Only in emergency situations you may consult your doctor. Holistic Healing is a liberating science. Too much dependence on ‘expert doctors’ who know more and more of less and less is not proper.” When you talk of “True Health” to parrot something which is not proper to be on the “politically correct” side is not my idea of promoting liberating science (holistic healing). The time to stand up against the pseudo science of Allopathy is now. L. R. e-mail

You have raised some important issues. I will address two of them – the intent of the disclaimer and the broader issue of changing the health care system.

With regard to the disclaimer, my primary intent is ethical. I am not a physician. I created the disclaimer with that fact in mind so as to decrease the risk of doing harm. I would feel terrible if someone would forego reasonable medical treatment and be harmed by the information in these articles. That is why I make it a point to discuss both conventional and alternative medical perspectives on the causes and treatments of illness in the articles that I write on specific conditions.

As a practical matter, there is also a legal dimension in terms of liability. Considering the staggering monetary awards that sometimes result from litigation, this is no small matter for anyone providing health information to the public. Frankly, the political dimension for which you seem to be most impassioned was so distant in my thinking that I am not sure it was even a factor as I wrote the disclaimer.

With regard to the broader issue of changing the health care system, when I encourage individuals to consult their physicians about medical problems, I leave it to the reader to define physician because there are very qualified alternative medicine physicians (e.g., naturopathic physicians, chiropractic physicians, etc.). So this part of the disclaimer is not necessarily an endorsement of allopathic medicine.

I believe that antagonism and direct opposition to allopathic medicine has virtually no chance of succeeding. Seeking to integrate the best from each of the various health care models using a person-centered approach is a more realistic strategy for improving the health care system. Integration of allopathic and alternative medicine also tends to decrease the chance of patients getting caught in the cross-fire between two embattled camps. Robert Smith’s *Misdiagnosed: Was My Wife a Casualty of America’s Medical Cold War?* documents this unfortunate aspect of today’s conflicting health paradigms and I recommend it for your consideration.

Over the years I have come to appreciate the concept of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). I also like the concept of integrative medicine as developed by Andrew Weil, M.D. As I have grown in my understanding of the Cayce philosophy of health, I have come to realize that such cooperative models are our best bet for improving health care options across the board with the least risk of doing harm.

To be sure, I often encounter strong views such as you have expressed coming from alternative medicine enthusiasts. I confess that at times I have had such strong feelings myself (which, by the way, have become more moderate with the passage of time). I think research is extremely important in substantiating the benefits of alternative medicine. To this end I am working continually.

I agree with your emphasis on self care. You may have noticed the numerous articles that I have written that have encouraged “empowerment” as a major form of multidimensional healing. I also agree with you that allopathic medicine is often the best choice for “emergency” situations. Yet, many people *choose* to use allopathic medicine in nonemergency situations as well. Edgar Cayce made many referrals to physicians for nonemergency treatments. He made use of the full spectrum of allopathic and alternative treatments based on the needs of each individual. I see it as a matter of *informed choice* – it is my job to provide accurate information and encourage readers to make up their own minds about the health options they have.

Thank you for providing constructive feedback and making the effort to express your heartfelt opinions on this emotionally charged subject. D.M.

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spond favorably to medicines or surgery with a decrease or elimination in seizures, the remaining 20 percent continue to suffer from seizures even with the best medical treatment. Fortunately, for some people (especially children), epilepsy does eventually go away.

In recent years, some fascinating alternative treatment options have become more accepted. Although the ketogenic diet has been around for decades, a movie that aired on national television a few years ago prompted renewed interest in this novel treatment. The ketogenic diet is low in calories and high in fat. It is used most commonly in children who do not respond to medications and are not good candidates for brain surgery. This very restrictive diet requires careful supervision.

Surgical implantation of a vagus nerve stimulator is another novel approach to decreasing or eliminating seizures. This procedure consists of implanting in the chest a pacemaker-type device that stimulates the vagus nerve running between the head and the abdomen. This is particularly fascinating because Edgar Cayce repeatedly stated that the cause of seizures in most cases of epilepsy can be traced to the abdomen.

### Cayce on Epilepsy

Edgar Cayce gave many readings for individuals suffering from various forms of epilepsy. While recognizing the wide variability of epilepsy, he also stated that in most cases the cause of the illness was not in the brain. The organs of the digestive system (abdomen) were most often cited as the source of the problem.

Specifically, Cayce insisted that most cases of epilepsy are caused by abdominal adhesions. Adhesions can be formed when inflammation or injury results in scar tissue that holds together two structures that are normally separate.

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# The Abdominal Brain

## Pay Attention to Gut Feelings

Each of us has a brain in our gut. It is the seat of a visceral intelligence that thrusts itself into our awareness when we are afraid or angry. It is the deep knowing that signals our true intentions, whether or not we are conscious of our own motivations. When the abdominal brain becomes diseased, we may experience a variety of conditions and syndromes, often with significant visceral symptoms.

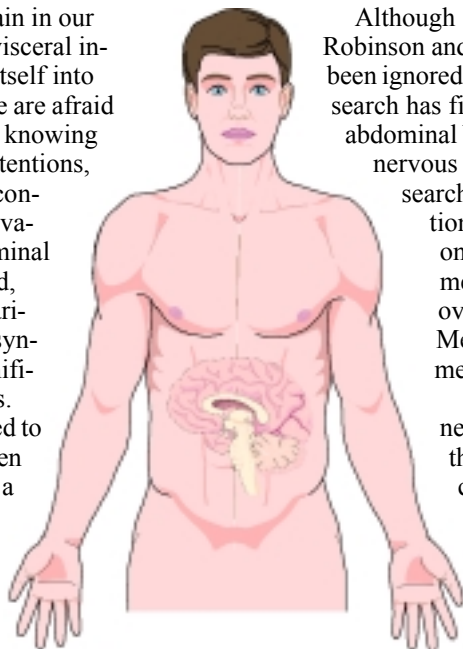
Edgar Cayce referred to the brain in our abdomen in several readings. In a wonderful reading in which he discussed the vibratory principles underlying some of the energy medicine appliances, he described it as the "... solar plexus brain ... those centers about the umbilicus, which are the electronic and atomic vibratory radiations of a human body." (1800-15)

### The Abdominal Brain

Cayce was not alone in emphasizing the central brain in the abdomen. In researching this topic, I was fortunate in finding a massive text written in 1907 by Byron Robinson, M.D. Titled *The Abdominal and Pelvic Brain*, this important book was cited by the early osteopathic physicians as the basis for some of their theories of how nerve reflexes work. The premise of Robinson's book is that the abdomen contains a vast and complex nervous system that influences, and to a great degree regulates, the processes of the visceral organs.

### Enteric Nervous System

Dr. Robinson was not alone in his fascination with the nervous system of the abdomen. At about the same time that Robinson was discovering the abdominal brain, British physiologist J. Langley of Cambridge University recognized that the nervous system of the gut was capable of functioning independent of the cerebral brain and central nervous system. Langley labeled the brain in the gut the "enteric nervous system" (ENS), which is the term now used for this immense group of nerves comprising about one-third of our entire nervous system.



Although for several decades Robinson and Langley's work has been ignored, modern medical research has finally rediscovered the abdominal brain with its enteric nervous system. In fact, research on the nerve connections in the abdomen is one of the "hot" areas of medical research with over 600 citations in Medline (the primary medical database).

To a large extent, the new interest in exploring the abdominal brain has come from the realization that both the gut brain and cerebral brain use many of the same neurotransmitters

(chemical messengers). For instance, the neurotransmitter serotonin (which is the main target of drugs like Prozac) was first discovered in the gut. About 90 percent of the body's serotonin is found in the abdominal organs.

In addition to the biochemical similarities between the cerebral brain and the abdominal brain, contemporary researchers are drawing computer analogies to describe the relationship between the brains of the body. The link between the smaller brain in the gut to the brain in the head has been likened to a computer network, which has implications for certain neurological conditions.

### Neurologic Disease

As stated above, Edgar Cayce was a strong advocate for the abdominal nervous system. Cayce believed that certain neurological syndromes (such as epilepsy and migraine) are often caused by problems in the abdomen. Naturally, a wide variety of non-intrusive therapies were recommended by Cayce for the treatment of these syndromes.

Cayce's ideas about the causation of epilepsy and migraine have some support in mainstream science. The modern medical literature recognizes that the abdomen plays a role in epilepsy and migraine. When abdominal symptoms are predominant, the patient may be diagnosed with "abdominal epilepsy" or "abdominal migraine."

To extend the computer analogy mentioned above to neurological illnesses

such as epilepsy, one might say that the nervous system network "crashes" during a seizure. The linkage between the abdominal brain and cerebral brain is disrupted. Depending upon the severity of the disruption (which Cayce referred to as "incoordination"), much of the functioning of the entire nervous system may temporarily go "off-line."

The therapeutic implications of Cayce's model of the abdominal brain in neurological disorders is that treatment directed at the abdomen (and especially the digestive system) can often address the underlying causes of the condition. Diet, abdominal castor oil packs, colonic irrigation, energy medicine, and osteopathic manipulation were typical modalities recommended by Cayce for healing the abdominal brain.

### Gut Reactions

Some of the most fascinating and practical aspects of this discussion of the abdominal brain are the ways in which visceral processes affect our mental, emotional, and spiritual functioning.

Common expressions about gut feelings, intestinal fortitude, and our inability to stomach something or someone point to the primacy of our visceral intelligence. Sometimes we honor a courageous act by saying that it "took a lot of guts."

The visceral nervous system is closely associated with our thoughts and feelings. When we are mentally or emotionally upset, our gut brain feels the impact of our distress and adversely affects the functioning of our visceral organs.

This is one of the premises of psychosomatic medicine. Achieving and maintaining mental and emotional calmness and relaxation is good for health. For example, meditation has been shown to help persons with bowel disease (see the *Health News* section on page 4).

There is also a spiritual aspect to the abdominal brain concept. The Cayce readings associate the abdominal brain with the sympathetic nervous system that is referred to as "the seat of all of the soul and spirit forces." (4595-1) Cayce even called this system "the brain manifestation of soul forces in the body." (4566-1)

Perhaps this helps explain why we often have innate visceral feelings and sensations when we meet someone who we have known in a past life. Sorting out gut feelings can go well beyond psychology as it is currently defined.

Now that you know a little more about the abdominal brain and the scientific and metaphysical basis for its functioning, you can feel more confident about trusting your instincts and paying more attention to your gut feelings.



# Health News



## Meditation Helps Irritable Bowel Syndrome

The Relaxation Response Meditation (RRM) program developed by Harvard medical researcher Herbert Benson has been shown to be helpful for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). IBS studies conducted by researchers at the Center for Stress and Anxiety Disorders (State University of New York at Albany) indicate that a six week course of RRM decreases symptoms in both the short- and long-term. Thirteen of sixteen IBS patients in the initial study completed the six week program after being matched into pairs and randomized to either a six week meditation group or a six week wait list. All subjects assigned to the wait list were subsequently treated. Patients in the treatment group were taught the meditation technique and asked to practice it twice a day for fifteen minutes.

At the three-month follow-up, the patients practicing RRM showed significant improvements in common IBS symptoms such as flatulence, belching, bloating, and diarrhea compared to the patients on the wait list. After one year, participants practicing RRM exhibited significant reductions in abdominal pain, diarrhea, flatulence, and bloating. The researchers concluded that RRM is a beneficial treatment for IBS in both the short- and the long-term.

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Edgar Cayce mentioned many causes of abdominal adhesions in epilepsy, including: injury or trauma, childhood fevers producing inflammation in the abdomen, spinal injuries (particularly to the lower spine), pregnancy complications, and birth trauma resulting from difficult or abnormal deliveries.

More specifically, Cayce noted that the abdominal adhesions in most cases of epilepsy are in the lacteal ducts. Lacteal ducts are part of the lymphatic system. They absorb nutrients from the small intestine as digested food passes through the intestine.

### Abdominal Cold Spot

This peculiar pathology in the abdomen was linked to a unique pattern of thermal variation on the surface of the skin. Cayce stated that, "From every condition that is of true [i.e., idiopathic] epileptic nature there will be found a cold spot or area between the lacteal duct and the caecum." (567-4) The lacteal duct and caecum are on the right side of the abdomen just below the last rib and extending down to the hip. Cayce said that the coolness resulted from decreased circulation through the area of the lacteal adhesions.

Cayce's statement represents a very straightforward hypothesis that can be tested using modern thermographic equipment. At Meridian Institute we have been measuring abdominal temperatures in epilepsy patients and other individuals to explore this hypothesis. Our preliminary

studies suggest that Cayce was correct about the abdominal cold spot. We intend to increase our research efforts in this area in the coming year.

We have also discovered articles in the medical literature that discuss "abdominal epilepsy" and "visceral reflex epilepsy" which are consistent with the Cayce hypothesis. (See the "Abdominal Brain" article on page 3 for more on the visceral nervous system.)

### Cayce's Treatment Model

The treatment rationale that underlies Edgar Cayce's therapeutic approach flows naturally from his premise as to the most frequent cause of epilepsy. Since Cayce insisted that most cases of epilepsy were caused by adhesions in the lacteal ducts of the abdomen, treatment is generally directed at breaking up adhesions in the lacteal duct area located along the right side of the abdomen.

The most frequent therapy recommended by Cayce for breaking up these adhesions was castor oil packs. Edgar Cayce stated that when a piece of flannel cloth is saturated with hot castor oil and placed on the abdomen, the combination of the heat and oil will break up the adhesions that can trigger seizures.

I have known several individuals who have successfully worked with Cayce's approach to epilepsy. Based on their feedback and my own research, I believe that the Cayce information on this condition offers a wonderful opportunity to give much to those afflicted with this illness. One of Edgar Cayce's readings also emphasizes this point with the admonition:

"... study on that called epilepsy – for three years! and you will be undefeatable!" (254-82)



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long-term benefits of regular garlic consumption. The authors observed that one limitation of the current evidence is that research does not sufficiently address the variations in garlic preparations, such as raw, cooked, or supplement form.

This is becoming a common pattern with many alternative medicine therapies. The potential benefits of a helpful treatment are somewhat overstated. The mainstream medical establishment reacts with negative reports on the shortcomings of the particular treatment, also sometimes to an exaggerated degree.

My take on this unfortunate trend is that the truth is usually somewhere in between. In the case of garlic, I think that eating garlic contributes to good health and may be helpful in preventing certain conditions, especially illness of the circulatory and digestive systems. It doesn't need to be a cure-all to make my list of preferred foods for a healthy, sensible diet.

### Practical Tips

When using garlic for cooking, be sure to add it at the end of the food preparation so that it will retain its beneficial effects as much as possible. I use garlic abundantly in almost all of the dishes that I cook. My favorite way of ingesting garlic is to press a couple of cloves into a small amount of extra virgin olive oil for spreading on toast. This makes exceptionally tasting and healthy garlic toast.

As with all foods, some people do react negatively to garlic with symptoms such as heartburn, stomach gas, or more severe allergic reactions. Know your own body and make adjustments accordingly. If you take anticoagulants or have hemophilia or low blood pressure, be sure to consult your physician about possible effects of garlic on your condition.

The social drawback to garlic consumption is obvious, but not unavoidable. Odorless garlic capsules are now available for those who are concerned about bad breath. Perhaps we should modify the old saying about apples to: "A clove of garlic a day will help keep the doctor away."



Visit the *True Health* Web site:  
[www.edgarcayce.org/th](http://www.edgarcayce.org/th)  
 for more information on epilepsy,  
 garlic, and the abdominal brain.