

THE TEACHINGS OF HIPPOCRATES (2)

BY David L. Duffy, MD

The Hippocratic Writings include a book called Epidemics. Hippocrates described a series of case studies. We will look at four cases, three in which the patients recovered and one in which the patient died. The concept which we wish to examine is what Hippocrates calls the "crisis". [See Hippocratic Writings, edited by G.E.R. Lloyd, Penguin Classics, New York, 1978, pages 87-138].



Case 1: "A girl who lay at a house on the Sacred Way at Abdera took a fever of the causus type. [Causus is an untranslatable Greek word describing a febrile illness.] She complained of thirst and was wakeful. Menstruation took place for the first time,

< Sixth day: much nausea, redness and shivering; she was distraught.

< Seventh day: no change. The urine, though thin, was of good color and there was no trouble with the bowels.

< Eighth day: deafness supervened, with high fever, insomnia, nausea and shivering. She became lucid. Urine the same.

<Ninth day: no change, nor on the following days. The deafness persisted.

< Fourteenth day: mind disordered; the fever became less.

< Seventeenth day: a large epistaxis [nose-bleed]; the deafness became slightly less. Nausea and deafness were present on the following days as well as some delirium.

< Twentieth day: pain in the feet and deafness. The delirium ceased and there was a slight nose-bleed and sweating; no fever.

< Twenty-fourth day: the fever returned and she was deaf again. The pain in the feet continued and her mind was wandering.

< Twenty-seventh day: severe sweating and lost her fever. The deafness cleared up and, although pain in the feet remained, in other respects the final crisis was reached," (Hippocratic Writings, pp. 131,132).

Case 2: "A girl at Larisa took a high fever of the causus type. She had insomnia and thirst while her tongue was dry and smoke-colored. The urine was of good color but thin.

< Second day: distressed; did not sleep.

< Third day: the stools were bulky, watery and greenish. On the following days stools of similar character were passed without distress.

< Fourth day: passed a small quantity of thin urine which contained suspended matter which did not settle. Delirium during the night.

< Sixth day: a violent and copious epistaxis. Shivering was followed by profuse hot sweating all over; she lost her fever and reached the crisis,

She menstruated for the first time during this illness, while the fever was still present, but after the crisis. She was only a girl. Throughout she suffered from nausea, shivering, a flushed face, aching eyes and heaviness of the head. In this case there was no relapse but a single crisis. The distress was experienced on the even days." (Hippocratic Writings, p. 135).

Case 3: "At Abdera, Pericles took a high fever of continued type, accompanied by distress. He had much thirst, was nauseated and could not keep liquids down. The spleen was enlarged and he had headaches.

< First day: epistaxis from the left nostril; the fever however increased considerably. He passed much cloudy white urine which did not sediment on standing.

< Second day: all symptoms more pronounced. The urine however was thick and settled more. The nausea was less severe and the patient slept.

< Third day: the fever became less and he passed a large quantity of ripe urine with a lot of sediment. A quiet night.

< Fourth day: about noon he had a warm sweat involving the whole body, the fever left him and he reached the crisis. There was no relapse. (Hippocratic Writings, p. 131).

Case 4: "The lad who lay by the Liars' Market took a fever as the result of exhaustion, having exerted himself by running more than he was accustomed.

< First day: bowels disordered with copious thin bilious stools; urine thin, rather dark; insomnia, thirst.

< Second day: all symptoms more pronounced; stools more copious and unhealthy. No sleep; his mind was disordered; slight sweating.

< Third day: uneasy, thirst, nausea, much tossing about distress, delirium, extremities cold and livid; a somewhat flabby bilateral distension of the hypochondrium [upper abdomen].

< Fourth day: no sleep; condition deteriorated.

< Seventh day: died. Age about twenty. (Hippocratic Writings, p. 118).

We have no idea about the actual diagnosis of these cases and we will not speculate. Their value is a pure description of untreated illnesses and the symptoms experienced. In each case of survival Hippocrates used the term "crisis". In his commentary about febrile illnesses he said: "In general, the diseases reached a crisis with difficulty, or there was no crisis and the illness remained chronic..." (Hippocratic Writings, p. 125).

In the context of Hippocrates' description the term "crisis" indicates the successful culmination of the body's attempt to eliminate waste and resolve the illness. In Modern Medicine we intervene with antibiotics and other drugs to control symptoms without thinking about the body's purpose for the symptoms. When a person has a cold and allows it to run his natural course, there is a discharge of clear mucus from the nose for a day or two. Then the mucus thickens and yellow or green phlegm comes out. The nose clears and the cold resolves. However, when the decongestants and antihistamines are used, the symptoms are suppressed. The nose remains stuffy for days or weeks. Sometimes the infection goes down into the chest and causes bronchitis or even pneumonia. When by suppression of symptoms the body fails to have a crisis, the condition may become chronic, like in asthma or chronic bronchitis.

Arnold Ehret's [Mucusless Diet Healing System](#) uses fasting and the mucusless diet to help the body eliminate waste in a way similar to Hippocrates' crisis. When you have a chronic condition and begin to apply fasting and a transition diet, you are voluntarily allowing yourself to "get sick" or go through a healing process.

Arnold Ehret described his experience after one of his fasts: "While sojourning in Italy many years ago, I drank about three quarts of fresh grape juice after a fast. At once I experienced a watery diarrhea set in foaming mucus. Almost immediately after, I experienced a feeling of such unusual strength that I easily performed the knee-bending and arm-stretching exercise 352 times." (Arnold Ehret's Mucusless Diet Healing System, Lesson XIX, pp. 127-128).



Teresa Mitchell was a student of Arnold Ehret. She went on a transition diet for two years. She experienced the shrinkage of the thyroid goiter in her neck. She decided to go on a strictly fruit diet for as long as it took for her body to heal. She continued the fruitarian diet for nine months. She described her "first cleansing" as follows: "Then the first great event happened. One night after a supper of grapes, I was awakened by a sensation of fullness in my throat. I had no particular feeling of nausea or pain, but upon reaching the bathroom I threw up large quantities of a sticky, clear substance.



After this ordeal was over I felt a new sense of well-being come over me. New strength and power seemed to fill my whole being. I thought, this must be the great final cleansing that Prof. Ehret taught us to expect. However, it was only a forerunner of two more similar experiences before the long expected day arrived" ("[My Road to Health](#)" by Teresa Mitchell in Arnold Ehret's [Rational Fasting for Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Rejuvenation](#), page 19).

When we contemplate the elegant design of the human body, we may conceive that there is an orderly process in which the body heals itself. From a modern perspective we understand the role of the immune system in causing symptoms of fatigue, headache and fever. For example there is a substance called interferon made by white blood cells. It is produced in response to viral infections. When given as a medication interferon causes symptoms including loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, runny nose, diarrhea, dizziness, headache, and fatigue.

What Hippocrates observed as a healing "crisis" can be described as a cleansing process. The body eliminates whatever it brings to the surface. The normal elimination channels are the lungs, the bowels, and the kidneys. Supplemental elimination channels include nasal discharge, a productive cough, menstruation, a skin rash, and fever with sweating.

Teresa Mitchell used an exclusive diet of fruit to trigger her personal healing crises. In her booklet she advocated patience in the healing process and warned of the dangers of rapid elimination.

"You should not try the complete fruit fast until you are quite certain that all of the dangerous waste matter has been eliminated from your body. Fruit is a relentless eliminator of diseased substances.

Many of us could not possibly undergo this severe type of housecleaning because of our physical condition. Vegetables, both naturally raw and cooked, work thoroughly but much more slowly and gently. The fruit diet in itself is the "proof of the pudding". If you are able to live on it comfortably, without any untoward reactions, you are healed. This reminds me of the case of a middle aged person who really tried to prepare himself over a period of three or four years for an exclusive fruit diet. Unfortunately, the "cleansing" was not complete for the sinuses still contained mucus which had not been completely emptied for years. Apparently there was also some pus in his system clamoring for release. His experience could have avoided this had he made certain that his system was free of old and poisonous substances. You can make certain by observing the reaction to a fruit fast of no more twenty-four hours duration. If the result is a severe headache, dizziness, bad breath, thickly coated tongue, increased mucus discharge from the throat and nose, it is quite certain that you are not ready for a pure fruit diet." ("[My Road to Health](#)" by Teresa Mitchell in Arnold Ehret's [Rational Fasting for Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Rejuvenation](#), page 28, 29).

Hippocrates considered the healing crisis as a key factor in the body's ability to recover from an illness. Arnold Ehret and Teresa Mitchell demonstrated that through lemon drink fasts or fruit fasts the healing crisis could be triggered. The fast is a diagnostic tool which indicates whether the body is clean or has residual waste to eliminate. The details of the transition diet and the frequency of fasting depend upon individual circumstances. Too rapid elimination can precipitate symptoms and be dangerous. Avoiding elimination can lead to chronic disease. It is my hope that we can follow Ehret's recommendation to combine a transition diet with intermittent short fasts. Ehret said that "the patient is able at the same time to dissolve and eliminate 'disease deposits' from the deepest tissues of the body; deposits that no doctor ever dreamed existed, and that no other method of healing has ever discovered or can remove. This, then, is the [Mucusless Diet Healing System](#), with fasting as an essential part of it". (Arnold Ehret's [Rational Fasting for Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Rejuvenation](#), page 58).

Professor Arnold Ehret founded The Club at the turn of the century. Today the goal of The Club is to assist people in their quest for better health through Professor Ehret's teachings.

The Club is where Ehretists and people interested in their health can work with other similarly motivated people to gain that edge. You are all welcomed to be a part of this exciting club that was designed by Ehret to unlock the healthfulness in all of us.

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