Cilantro
Coriandrum sativum
By Steven Horne and Paula Perretty

Most of us are familiar with cilantro leaves as an ingredient in salsas, guacamole and cilantro pesto. Cilantro seeds for some reason are known as coriander, another spice you’re probably familiar with. You may be less familiar with the use of cilantro and coriander seed as an herbal medicine, even though this plant has been used for medicine for thousands of years.

Cilantro and coriander have probably been used by humans since 5000 BC. Both the herb and its seed are mentioned in Sanskrit writing dating back to 1500 BC and are also mentioned in the Bible. Seeds have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs and in caves in Israel. It is thought that the Romans brought it to Britain as a meat preserver The British colonists brought it to North America in 1670. It was one of the first herbs and spices cultivated by the early settlers and even today, it is a main ingredient in sausage. Could it be that all these peoples intuitively knew that cilantro stimulates the appetite and digestive juices and helps relieve minor digestive irritation?

A more recently discovered use for cilantro is its ability to help eliminate heavy metals and other neurotoxins from the body. This discovery was made by accident in 1995 by a Dr. Omura. He found that his patients eliminated mercury in their urine after his new cook started feeding them soups containing cilantro.

Dr. Omura and his associates found that antibiotics were ineffective in treating infections when heavy metals such as mercury and lead were present. Mercury is a two-edged sword in that it is not only a poison in and of itself, but when it is present in the body it reduces the effect of antibiotics in the treatment of infections. “They hypothesized that certain infectious organisms somehow use mercury or lead to protect themselves from antibiotics or that deposits of heavy metals somehow make antibiotics ineffective.” After the patients started eating the cilantro and eliminating the heavy metals, they were given another round of antibiotics or antiviral drugs, which proved more effective.

As we have hinted, cilantro has long been considered an aid to the digestive system. It is known to stimulate the appetite and promote digestive secretions, including the flow of bile from the gallbladder. The compounds in cilantro are collected and bound to toxins being processed via the liver, and are secreted along with the cilantro compounds. Because cilantro also contains numerous antioxidants, such as quercetin and beta-carotene, it also helps reduce the oxidative stress on the cells caused by these toxins.

In 1996, Dr. Omura investigated the potential health hazard of mercury in dental amalgam. In this case study, they monitored a patient who was having amalgam fillings removed. Even though considerable care was used so that the patient would not swallow minute particles of amalgam during the removal process (drilling), significant deposits of mercury were still found in the patient’s lungs, kidneys, liver, and heart. These deposits were not present prior to the amalgam removal. However, taking cilantro four times a day eliminated the mercury deposits. Omura et al. (1996) initiated cilantro detoxification treatment before the removal procedure and continued it for about 2-3 weeks afterward.

Cilantro has the ability to detoxify and clear heavy metals and other neurotoxins from bones, the brain and the central nervous system. It is used in chelation therapy because it contains chemicals that bind with toxins, especially mercury and lead. The herb will also bind and mobilize neurotoxins from the intracellular space that surrounds the mitochondria that controls cellular respiration. It will also shuttle heavy metals out of the cell nucleus, which can help reverse DNA damage caused, most notably, by mercury.

Cilantro is found in Heavy Metal Detox, but can also be used as a food to further enhance the elimination of heavy metals, like mercury and lead, and other neurotoxins from the body.

Selected References

In This Issue
Cilantro by Steven Horne and Paula Perretty . . . . . . . 1
Are You For or Against Life: Thoughts on Antibiotics, Superbugs and Alternative Methods of Approaching Infection by Steven Horne . . . . . . . 2-6
Kimberly Balas’ Clinician’s Corner: Colloidal Silver, Thymus Products and Vaccine Reaction. . . . 7
Are You For or Against Life?

Thoughts on Antibiotics, SuperBugs and Alternative Methods of Approaching Infection

by Steven H. Horne, RH (AHG)

An antibiotic is a chemical compound that inhibits or abolishes the growth of microorganisms. “Anti” means against and “biotic” means life, so antibiotic literally means “against life,” an interesting observation considering the “war” mind-set out of which antibiotics grow. (I’ll explain more about this later.)

Most antibiotics are anti-bacterial and do not have activity against viruses, fungi, or other microbes. Anti-bacterial antibiotics can be categorized based on their target specificity: “narrow-spectrum” antibiotics target particular types of bacteria, such as Gram-negative or Gram-positive bacteria, while broad-spectrum antibiotics affect a wide range of bacteria.

The first antibiotic compounds used in modern medicine were produced and isolated from living organisms; for example, penicillin is produced by fungi in the genus Penicillin. Penicillin first became widely used in World War II, where it was used to treat infected wounds—a reasonable use of the drug.

Unfortunately, antibiotics have been seriously overused for conditions where they have little or no effect. They are fed to animals for “prevention” of infection or more likely as a means of offsetting unsanitary living conditions for animals. In humans, they are prescribed for conditions for which they have little or no effect, such as colds, sore throats and earaches.

There are two main problems with the indiscriminate use of antibiotics. First, by killing friendly bacteria in the colon, broad-spectrum antibiotics allow yeast and other unfriendly microbes to multiply out of control, which causes intestinal inflammation, leaky gut syndrome and a weakening of the immune system. Second, bacteria develop a resistance to antibiotics, so the longer they are used, the tougher bacteria become to kill. This leads to antibiotic resistant infections, which have sometimes been called “superbugs.”

Antibiotic resistance for penicillin started within four years of its introduction. This is why new antibiotics have to be constantly developed. Most modern antibiotics don’t come from living things, they are synthetic compounds and even these synthetic compounds are starting to fail. Highly resistant and virulent microbes have now become a worldwide problem, primarily in hospitals and medical clinics. Joe Cranston, PhD, Director of the Dept of Drug Policy and Standards of the American Medical Association stated, “Whenever antibiotics are used, there is selective pressure for resistance to occur. It builds upon itself.”

Clearly, the need to look for alternative methods of fighting infection is a real one. But, before we address natural alternatives to antibiotics, let’s first consider the whole “anti” mindset.

The Germ Theory

Growing up, I accepted the “germ theory” without question. Public education taught me that colds, flu, sore throats, chicken pox, measles and a host of other diseases were caused by bacteria and viruses. My mother dutifully took me to the doctor each time I was sick, who prescribed penicillin for me. At the age of 14, he diagnosed me with chronic sinusitis and put me on a daily dose of penicillin for two years. Two years later, my sinus problems were worse than ever. This was probably due to increasing weakness of the immune system due to yeast overgrowth and to the bacterial resistance I had developed to the antibiotics.

As I began to look for alternatives, I learned the “biological terrain” theory. I learned that the weakened diseased tissues in my body were “hosts” for microbes. The idea entered my head that germs were like flies and my damaged tissues were like a garbage pile. I could kill the flies, but if I didn’t remove the garbage the flies would be back as soon as the pesticide wore off. So, I began a slow process of eating more natural foods and detoxifying my body.

It worked and I got better. Thus, I swore off antibiotics (and the germ theory) and embraced the biological terrain concept. It has served me well. I have focused on changing the terrain.
rather than worrying about infection, even though I use the “war” language of the germ theory sometimes because it takes so long to explain the concept of biological terrain to people.

Recently, however, I’ve begun to rethink my position on germs a little. It started when I read a book called 1491, which put forth new archeological evidence of what the Americas were like before Columbus. Apparently, the Americas were very densely populated at the time of Columbus and in some ways, Native Americans were stronger (and healthier) than their European contemporaries. Also, they were not so unevenly matched in technology. For example, Native American bows and arrows could shoot farther and with more accuracy than European guns.

In diet and hygiene, the Native Americans were actually ahead of the Europeans. In fact, early explorers to the Americas couldn’t understand why Native Americans bathed every day, as Europeans at the time had very poor hygiene and were reluctant to bathe once a week. Early Native Americans complained the Europeans were “dirty.”

Native Americans also had a better diet, partly due to a better developed system of agriculture. Native Americans had spent generations perfecting a wide variety of food crops, including: corn, beans, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, both sweet and hot peppers, sunflowers, zucchini, peanuts, sweet potatoes, chocolate, vanilla, tapioca, avocado and many more. Since these foods are now cultivated and used in cuisines on every continent, it is easy to forget that all of these foods were developed by Native Americans.*

But, I digress from my major point. What enabled Europeans to conquer the Americas was not superior technology, but their own lack of good sanitation. The Europeans brought germs to America that Native Americans had never encountered and to which they had no immunity. Archeologists are discovering that 90% of the population of North and South America was wiped out by diseases like smallpox, measles, chicken pox, etc. The devastation left in the wake of these plagues was what allowed the European settlers to gain a foothold. In other words, the only reason there was a place for the Pilgrims to land and allowed the European settlers to gain a foothold. In other words, the only reason there was a place for the Pilgrims to land and settle without being wiped out by Native Americans was that a plague had gone through the year before and wiped out most of the inhabitants of the region.**

**If you want to read more about this, let me recommend the book: Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World by Jack Weatherford. If you read it, you’ll discover that Native American technology and culture transformed the world, not just in food, but also in wealth, medicine, government and other fields. You’ll never see Native Americans as primitive savages again.

This book really got me to thinking about my adamant belief in the biological terrain theory. After all, the Native Americans were a fairly healthy people, living on good food and in an environment free of chemical toxins. If the biological terrain theory was completely true, then why weren’t they immune to the microbes brought by European explorers? Perhaps, I thought, as with so many other things, I’d swung too far to the opposite end and that the truth lies somewhere in between.

I remember Edward Milo Millet (my first herb teacher) saying once that antibiotics are necessary sometimes. He said that once a forest fire gets going it will burn green wood as well as the dry, dead material. Since that time, I’ve learned that multiplying germs produce toxins and that these toxins are what really causes the destruction associated with infection. So, from what I understand, disease microbes find a suitable terrain in the body and start multiplying. As they feed and multiply, they create a toxic environment that damages nearby healthy tissue creating a larger environment for them to grow. Yeast appears to do this as it secretes a toxin that makes a person crave sugar, which, in turn feeds the growth of the yeast.

So, what if both theories are correct? What if infectious disease is partly caused by germs and partly caused by terrain?

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**If you are interested in reading the evidence for these assertions, read 1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus by Charles C. Mann.
A Comprehensive Approach to Infection

This line of reasoning led me to a further realization. The herbal remedies that have been historically used to treat these kinds of infectious diseases nearly all have antimicrobial properties. However, their historical use is defined at least partly by their energetic properties (in other words, by how they affect biological terrain). So, I realized our herbal remedies treat both the infection (that is, they act against the microbes directly) and they support the terrain by promoting better tissue health.

Unfortunately, modern medicine looks at only one side of the equation. Their entire focus is on “killing” the microbes. This bias tends to affect people’s selection of herbal remedies as well. People are selecting remedies based on their antimicrobial properties (antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal) with no regard for how they affect terrain.

Using echinacea and goldenseal to treat a cold is a good example of this. The problem with selecting remedies this way is that they are only half as effective as they might otherwise be.

Think about this for a moment. In any placebo-controlled, double-blind study, patients with exactly the same disease are given either a placebo or the medication being tested. What researchers are looking for is a statistically significant improvement in a statistically significant number of patients. So, if 60% of the patients have a 40-60% improvement in comparison to the placebo, then the medicine has some “proof” behind it. But why didn’t everyone respond? In my mind, science is supposed to be about consistent, duplicatable results. These results seem pretty “soft” to me and lack in a dependable, duplicatable accuracy.

Here’s where traditional herbalism contains concepts which “come to the rescue,” so to speak. For hundreds, and in many cases thousands, of years, herbal healers have been asking the question, “What is different about the people who respond to this herb, versus those who respond to that herb?” In answering this question they have come up with various metaphorical systems based on energy. By assessing terrain-based factors in the patient, they have classified remedies both in how they affect pathology and how they affect terrain.

So, when you have an infectious process going on, the ideal thing is to “knock down” the microbes so their toxins will stop damaging healthy tissue and to restore balance to the terrain at the same time to prevent reoccurrence. With that understanding, I’m going to talk about some of my favorite antimicrobial herbs and how they affect the terrain—in other words, where they can be applied most effectively.

Garlic

Crushed raw garlic has long been my favorite antimicrobial remedy, and when it comes to a direct substitute for antibiotics in fighting bacterial infection, I don’t think anything is quite its equal. Fortunately, unlike antibiotics, it also works on viral infections and because it is antifungal, it won’t contribute to yeast overgrowth, one of the major side effects of antibiotics.

Garlic is a pungent remedy, however, which means it is strongly heating and has a drying effect, too. Pungent herbs disperse energy to the surface of the body (the skin and mucus membranes), which increases the discharge of toxins. Garlic’s primary affinity, however, is for the lungs—so its best application is for infections in the lungs. Its secondary affinity is for the digestive tract, but I have not found it to be as effective at intestinal infections (such as the flu) as it is at respiratory infections (like pneumonia).

Because garlic is so heating and drying, it generally doesn’t work as well for people who tend to be hot and dry constitutionally. It “overheats” them. So, the patient who tends to have a ruddy (reddish) complexion, tends to run a “hot” metabolism, sweats easily and is more aggressive will probably not find garlic as effective as a person with a cooler temperament. Garlic is best suited to people with a “phlegmatic” constitution, one that tends to run colder, with paler skin, chills easily and has a tendency to chronic sinus congestion. If you look at someone’s tongue and there is a thick, white, moist coating on it, then garlic would probably be helpful. If the tongue is bright red, garlic will probably be less effective. Garlic is not the best choice for high fevers, either, although I have successfully used garlic enemas for fevers in children.

As I mentioned, crushed, raw garlic has the strongest effect. Garlic oil also has a lot of antimicrobial effect. NSP’s High Potency Garlic comes in third, and powdered garlic in capsules and odorless garlic products are dead last, being nearly worthless in fighting infection.

Goldenseal

My mother used to put goldenseal on canker sores when I was little and I hated the stuff, but nowadays, it’s one of my favorite herbal remedies. Goldenseal is one of a number of herbs (including Oregon grape, barberry, coptis, yellow root and several others) that contain berberine alkaloids. These alkaloids have a decent antibacterial action, although they are not as potent at directly killing bacteria as garlic. Each of these remedies is subtly different from the others as berberine is not the only “active” compound in them.

Goldenseal is touted in some herbals, such as Back to Eden, as a virtual “cure-all,” but I was often disappointed in its actions.
Echinacea

A recent study tested echinacea’s effectiveness against colds and came up with a very negative result. There are some controversies around the study, particularly regarding the quantity of the herb administered, but the results don’t surprise me—I’ve never found echinacea that helpful for colds. Yes, echinacea is antiviral, but terrain-wise, the common cold is rarely the ideal setting to test echinacea’s full potential.

Like goldenseal, echinacea is a bitter, which means it is cooling and drying. Echinacea angustifolia is also acrid, which gives it a burning, tingling sensation similar to lobelia. This cooling action means it is not the best choice for the early stages of a respiratory infection where there is thin, watery mucus or copious white mucus.

In fact, using echinacea for colds is a fairly modern use, as traditionally it was used for serious bacterial infections and snakebites. Echinacea’s primary affinity is not for the respiratory or digestive tracts, but for the blood and lymph. It fights infections that have gone beyond the “surface” of the skin and mucus membranes and have entered the blood. In fact, an ideal indication for echinacea is blood poisoning. If you’ve ever seen a wound with red streaks moving away from it, you’re looking at a very serious bacterial infection that is spreading through the blood stream. Echinacea is an excellent remedy for this type of infection.

Echinacea inhibits the enzymes secreted by bacteria to break down connective tissue so they can spread. In effect, echinacea inhibits the “forest fire” of the infection from spreading. It creates containment and then stimulates the immune factors in the blood to “mop up” the bacteria in the contained area. So, echinacea is ideal for localized infections with acute swelling and inflammation, such as sore throats, tonsillitis and infected, swollen lymph nodes.

The popular combination of goldenseal and echinacea is a very good remedy for lingering, low-grade infections that the body is having a hard time shaking. So, if you have a cold that you didn’t quite recover from that is lingering a week later, this blend is a good option.

Yarrow

Earlier, I mentioned that I didn’t think garlic was the best option for fevers. Well, yarrow is. Yarrow is at once aromatic, bitter and astringent. Its odd mix of energetic qualities make it suitable for a wide range of applications, depending on how it is prepared and administered. Because it is aromatic, yarrow, like garlic, is dispersing—meaning it helps to flush toxins out of the skin and mucus membranes. However, the bitterness and astringency of yarrow mean that it is also cooling, rather than heating, so it relieves heat and irritation at the same time. Like echinacea, yarrow works on the deep level of the blood, rather than the superficial level of the skin and membranes.

These qualities make yarrow flowers my favorite remedy for feverish conditions or infections where the tongue is red and pointed, an indication of acute “heat” in the system. In my experience, yarrow does this best when taken in liquid form. It does not seem to have quite as much potency in capsule form. A strong infusion made from the flowers is the most potent way to use this medicine, but it tastes terrible. When I first tried it many years ago I could barely gag it down. Now, I know that combining it with elderflowers and peppermint results in a much more pleasant-tasting, but still effective remedy. I dubbed this blend “children’s composition” and now use it as a glycerin extract, which is a very effective remedy for acute viral infections.

Besides helping to bring down acute fevers, “children’s composition” (which works for adults, too) also works well in the very early stages of a cold where there is thin, watery mucus that burns the nose and upper lip. The cooling, but dispersing, action of yarrow helps flush the irritants while at the same time cooling and soothing the heat. This blend is a cornerstone of my “Dr. Mom-Dr. Dad” system for treating children.

Other Remedies

The five remedies listed above are the primary single-herb remedies I’ve used to fight infection in my family. However, there are a few others I’d like to mention.
Myrrh

This one is a pretty good antimicrobial agent. It was used to embalm bodies anciently, so it obviously inhibits a wide variety of microbes. It is both aromatic and bitter and appears to work best on mucus membranes and skin.

Uva Ursi

Here we have a very specific agent that works almost exclusively on the urinary tract. It’s one of my favorite remedies for urinary tract infections. I find it works best as a tea. Drink about 1/2 to 1 cup per day of a tea made with 3-4 capsules of uva ursi per cup of boiling water. This remedy is astringent, so it is cooling and drying.

Essential Oils

A number of essential oils are very good antimicrobial agents, including tea tree oil, thyme and oregano. All of these substances make wonderful topical antiseptics, but should be used with caution internally as they are extremely potent. Because they are essential oils, they are heating and drying and have a dispersing energy, making them good for “cold” and “damp” conditions and infections on the skin and membranes, but are not the best choices for deeper infections in the blood and lymph.

These oils can be diffused into the air to prevent the spread of microbes. They can also be applied topically in massage lotions or in baths and are very effective when used in this manner. I have rubbed massage oil made with disinfectant oils into swollen lymph nodes or other infected body parts with great success. This is also the safest way to use them.

Oregon Grape

Like goldenseal, oregon grape contains berberine alkaloids, but it has more affinity for the liver and lymphatics and less affinity for the digestive tract and mucus membranes. I find that Oregon grape is a better “blood purifier” than goldenseal and is very good at clearing up infections that involve the skin like chicken pox and measles.

Wild Indigo (Baptista)

This is a remedy I learned about from David Winston. It is for very serious, deep-seated infection where there is putrefaction. He says that there is a smell of decaying meat associated with these types of infections. Baptista combines really well with echinacea to treat these kinds of serious septic conditions, but it is unlikely you’ll have clients with this kind of problem since they will probably be treated by a doctor if they have an infection this bad.

Lomatium

This is an antiviral that I’ve had some success with. It’s in the carrot family and has worked on some serious, deep-seated viral conditions that I couldn’t get other remedies to touch.

Honey

Applied topically, honey can completely halt the growth of all the major wound-infesting species of bacteria as well as fungal infections. If you mix some honey with a little bit of essential oil, you have a very effective antimicrobial dressing for wounds.

Colloidal Silver

Colloidal silver is not an herb or even a nutritional supplement. It is a suspension of silver that are small enough to be absorbed into the body. Silver was used as a germicide and an antibiotic before modern antibiotics were developed. In previous centuries, users would shave silver particles into their drinking water, or submerge whole silver pieces in the drinking water. The practice of eating with silver utensils (i.e., silverware) may have resulted from a belief in the healthful properties of silver.

Unlike antibiotics, silver is effective against bacteria, viruses and fungus and will not target beneficial bacteria of the gastrointestinal or female reproductive tract. I’m not sure how I would classify the energetics of silver as a remedy, but it seems to be “cooling” in nature. It is definitely not warming. It probably works best in inflammatory situations.

NSP’s colloidal silver (being renamed Silver Shield) uses only the finest particle-size colloids to ensure maximum efficiency. It is completely non-toxic, and will not cause argyria, a blue/gray discoloration of the skin. This patented product was found to be both bacteriostatic and bactericidal for all organisms tested with equal or broader spectrum than the antibiotics it was tested against.

I hope this information has given you a better idea of where and how to use various antiseptic and antibiotic substances. I still believe our primary objective should be to balance the terrain, but, like Ed Millet taught me, you sometimes have to stop the “forest fire” of the infection, too.

Selected References

Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy by Simon Mill and Kerry Bone
Herbal Defense by Robyn Landis
Prescription for Natural Healing by James F. Balch and Phyllis A. Balch
The Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants by Andrew Chevallier
The Rise of Antibiotic-Resistant Infections by Ricki Lewis, Ph.D.
Kimberly Balas’ Clinician’s Corner

Colloidal Silver, Thymus Products and Vaccine Reaction

Brain Virus and Colloidal Silver

I need some help. I just talked with a distributor about using Colloidal Silver for a virus in the brain and they said it would never get there. My question is why?

Here in Northern California, we are having negative reactions from the chemical trails and several people besides me are experiencing issues involving the brain and cranial nerves because of these chemical trails. We are having issues with vertigo, dizziness, the head feeling like things are moving in it, feeling like you have to scratch your head (almost like you have something in your hair) and a similar sensation on the face. It is muscle testing as a viral infection. We need help here and your suggestions will be appreciated.

Merry

The reason you are being told this about the colloidal silver is because it has a difficult time passing the blood-brain barrier. I would suggest using the colloidal silver as a nose spray. The epithelium membrane is the largest exposure the central nervous system has to the outside world. The olfactory tract would then get it to the neuro-endocrine axis. That could be a start.

I would use a lot of antiviral essential oils in a diffuser as well. The essential oils when inhaled will travel directly to the brain. The oils also inhibit the spread of infection.

Colloidal Silver for Cats

Is it OK to give cats colloidal silver when they are sick and if so, how much?

Jeanne

Yes, I usually do just a few drops three to four times per day.

Swollen Lymph Node

My 5 yr. old daughter has a very large swollen lymph gland on her neck. I’ve never seen one so big. I’ve done the dry brushing and putting lobelia and Ti Fu oil on it. It doesn’t seem to be helping. She’s never taken antibiotics before, but I’m wondering if she needs them.

Any help would be appreciated.

Guinene

I would try using Lymph Drainage formula and Colloidal Silver internally. She might also benefit from a little tea made from the E-Tea product or some Oregon grape.

Substitute for Thymus Glandular

NSP used to have a product called Thymus Glandular. Did they change the name or discontinue it. What could you use in place of this product?

Gale

We have THIM-J, Defense Maintenance, Organic Germanium, E-Tea and Chinese Blood Build. All of these remedies can be helpful for strengthening the thymus gland.

Vaccine Reaction

I am looking for suggestions for a 7-month-old girl that is having an apparent vaccine reaction. She is shaking, quivering and twitching. She had a minor reaction after the first shot, but her mom took her in for another shot anyway. When she received the second shot she had a more severe reaction. I am looking for suggestions beyond “no more vaccines,” Vaccine Detox and Omega 3’s.

Lee

Besides the Vaccine Detox homeopathic, I would make a tea from the Heavy Metal Detox to remove the heavy metals from the vaccine. These heavy metals damage the nerves, which appears to be where the problem is, so I would try rebuilding the nerves with Nerve Eight.

It is important to keep the sulfation pathways of the liver open to flush the residuals, so use herbs like red raspberry or echinacea which have a good sulfur content. Cruciferous vegetables are also rich in sulphur compounds and will aid this detoxification pathway.

Keep the lymph moving with Lymphatic Drainage and have her take baths in Epsom salts, which helps the body eliminate the toxins. Besides giving her Omega-3, I would also give her coconut oil. Good fats help to bind the toxins and repair the nerves.

Kimberly Balas is a board certified naturopath and clinical nutritionist. She is currently head of the research department and a certified instructor for all Tree of Light courses. She is available for consultations by phone or at her Wyoming office. For more information on scheduling a consult, please phone 307-277-2466.