

How A Well Crafted Retail Nutritional Strategy Can Benefit Your Patients And Your Practice

by Dr. Bill Hemmer



Building a nutritional profit center is not as easy as 1-2-3. But, on the other hand, it doesn't have to be as difficult as some make it seem. As a good friend of mine once told me, "Always begin with the end in mind." Embracing that thought, I always consider what is best for your patients. I always try to put myself in their shoes and understand what pains they are suffering from.

Once you understand the pains your patients are experiencing, you can begin to use retailing strategies to educate them. Let's use inflammation as an example. It is one of the most common causes of pain that your patients experience. Inflammation is a major issue; everybody suffers from inflammation to some degree, and drug companies spend billions of dollars promoting anti-inflammatory pills. Your job is to educate your patients on the benefits of your "more natural" solution.

Nutritional supplements may help alleviate your patients' inflammation problems. However, your role also becomes one of educating them about the other benefits they will experience beyond the obvious short-term relief. If you are not offering inflammation relief supplements as part of your retail strategy, patients may turn to their medical doctors for help or seek their own solution, and will likely go to a drug-

based, anti-inflammatory solution that is readily available and visible to consumers.

Most chiropractors today accept that, if they don't address symptoms such as inflammation, they are leaving an important component of patient care on the table. It is second nature to find and determine when inflammation may be interfering with their adjustment, and when you could recommend a supplement designed to reduce it. Some doctors choose a clinical approach, offering a supplement only when it meets clinical need, while others take the retail approach and showcase their supplements and hope that their patients will "get it."

Consider that perhaps there is a third option: a hybrid one. In this approach, the doctor incorporates nutrition with their chiropractic care and makes nutritional recommendations as the need arises, but also counts on their retailing strategy to prepare their patients for those clinical recommendations. A clearly thought out (hybrid) retail strategy can do much to support the doctor's recommendation, the acceptance of that recommendation, and the patients' follow-through in taking the supplement.

This hybrid retail strategy begins with educating your patients about the possible causes of their pain, in this case, inflammation. Remember,

that while the appropriate educational points about a particular symptom may seem old-hat or basic to you, they may not to your patients. There are many inflammation messages you can share with your patients:

- Inflammation is the body's reaction to trauma or infection.
- It causes pain, redness, swelling, and can reduce bodily function.
- Though inflammation is a normal response, in certain situations inflammation can get out of control and cause even more problems.
- Everybody suffers from inflammation at one time or another, be they young or old, men or women, athletes or couch potatoes.
- Inflammation may interfere with your adjustment.

There are two major benefits to this educational approach. Firstly, when you make recommendations, your patients are more likely to understand what you're talking about because they will be better informed and prepared to understand the suggested treatment. Secondly, and perhaps surprisingly to some practitioners, informed patients will bring up the issue of inflammation much more often than un-informed ones. And studies show that consumers are more likely to get engaged, when it is their choice.

At the same time that you are educating your patients about their symptoms, you should also be offer-

ing a solution. While there are many solutions to inflammation, we recommend that, from a retail perspective, Omega-3 fish oil is the perfect anti-inflammation solution. We all know that there are two types of inflammation: acute and chronic, and I'll address those momentarily.

In the meantime, we also have to recognize that inflammation is an ever-occurring situation; therefore, addressing inflammation as part of an overall wellness program makes sense. The inflammation wellness approach will not surprise you: 1) eat a diet high in lean protein; 2) exercise; and 3) take a daily dose of Omega-3 fish oil. This means that every one of your patients should be taking Omega-3 fish oil, and this

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should also be addressed as part of your retail communications strategy.

Patients presenting with acute inflammation, usually due to trauma or sports injury, can also benefit from Omega-3 fish oils, so you should include their symptoms in your messaging as well. Acute inflammation patients also respond positively to chlorophyll or sesame seed oil. These supplements help to control acute inflammation, which is a desired treatment objective.

We classify chronic inflammation patients as those that have been suffering for more than three months. This type of inflammation may present itself as arthritis or continuous swelling, but in simplest terms it is inflammation that just won't go away. In these situations I still recommend Omega-3 fish oils, but I also consider Boswellia or Curcumin as additional support supplements.

As you can see, Omega-3 fish oil is a common thread in the treatment of inflammation. It is a key supplement,

whether you're just starting out in nutrition, or you are a high-level nutrition chiropractor. Therefore, as part of your retailing strategy, you want to tell the Omega-3 fish oil story. Here are some basic talking points you can use:

- Your body cannot make Omega-3; we must get it from our diets.
- Omega-3 is best found in fatty fish such as salmon and tuna, avocado, walnuts, and olive oil.
- If you're eating plenty of those foods you may be getting your daily dose of Omega-3.
- If not, you should consider taking Omega-3.
- There is no risk in taking Omega-3.
- Numerous bodily functions need Omega-3 fatty acids.

- There is strong evidence that Omega-3 fatty acids from fish oil can lower blood pressure and triglyceride levels.
- It's also good for your joints, skin, vision, brain, and heart.

Omega-3 fish oil is an ideal supplement starting point to include in your practice. Thereafter, your retail communications strategy could include flyers, posters, shelf-talkers, talking points, and reception room TV messages, just to name a few. Regardless of the promotional methods you employ, the key to maximizing your retail opportunity is to identify the problem, share a solution, and then begin the process of educating your patients as to the solutions you provide. A retailing strategy that informs and educates your patients on the symptoms and potential solutions you offer can be a great way to increase the success of your supplementation efforts, as well as the health of your patients.

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