A guide from *Thrive Adult Primary Care*

Could my symptoms be more connected than I think?

You Have One Body:

Why seemingly unrelated symptoms may make more sense when you stop looking at them one at a time

Mary A Medeiros MD MPH

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This guide is educational and general in nature.
It isn't personalized medical advice, and it doesn't replace a conversation with your own physician — especially if you have an existing health condition, or if it's been a while since you've moved your body with any intensity.

YOU'RE DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT

Maybe you're tired all day—but somehow wide awake when it's finally time to sleep.

Your stomach has become unpredictable, even though you've tried to eat all the "right" things.

Your heart occasionally races. You get headaches you never used to get. Your weight seems to have developed a mind of its own.

Things that once barely fazed you—a bad night's sleep, a stressful week, a hard workout, a glass of wine, a hectic trip—now seem to knock you sideways.

And you're trying really hard.

So you do what responsible people do.

You make the appointments.
You get the bloodwork.
You try the diet.
You buy the supplements.
You exercise harder. Or differently. Or more consistently.
You try to reduce your stress.

And eventually you start collecting words:

MIGRAINE · IBS · ANXIETY
INSOMNIA · REFLUX · OBESITY
PERIMENOPAUSE
AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

Some of those diagnoses may be exactly right.
But somehow, the collection of names
still doesn't explain you.

So why does your body seem
to be getting worse
at doing things that used to be easy?

What if your body isn't the problem?

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When capable people encounter a problem, we tend to respond by working harder.
So when the problem is our own body, we do the same thing:

- Eat better.
- Exercise more.
- Fix the sleep.
- Get more disciplined.

But after enough unsuccessful attempts, **something subtle can happen:**

You stop thinking,

"Something needs my attention."

And start thinking,

"Something is wrong with me."

Your body becomes the adversary.

- The brain that won't shut off.
- The metabolism that won't behave.
- The immune system that keeps causing trouble.

But there is another way to understand what you're experiencing.

It begins with one simple fact:

Your body does not know what medical specialty it belongs to.

One Body.
Many Systems.

We divide medicine into specialties for a good reason.
The human body is enormously complicated.
No one can become an expert in all of it.

- One physician studies the heart.
- Another studies the digestive system.
- Another studies hormones.

Those divisions help us understand the body.

But your body doesn't actually contain those divisions.

Your body is deeply interconnected within itself.

Your brain communicates with your gut.

Your nervous system influences
your heart and blood vessels.

Hormones affect your metabolism,
sleep, appetite, mood
and reproductive function.

Your immune system communicates
with tissues throughout your body.

Your muscles aren't just
machinery that moves your skeleton.
They participate in metabolism and signaling too.

Everything is happening *at once*.

Everything is happening *in you*.

That doesn't mean your migraine and your diarrhea necessarily have the same cause.

It means they aren't happening
in two different people.

And sometimes, ***looking at each symptom separately can obscure*** an important question:

What is happening to the organism experiencing all of them?

Your body's job is not to stay the same

We often imagine "balance" as a perfectly still state. But living bodies don't work that way.

Your heart rate changes when you stand up.

Your digestive system changes after you eat.

Your blood vessels respond to temperature.

Your muscles respond to use.

Your hormones change across the day.

Your brain and body respond when you perceive danger—and again when the danger has passed.

Your body is constantly adjusting itself to meet the next moment.



In physiology, one useful concept for this is

Allostasis: maintaining stability through change.

Think about that for a moment.
Being healthy doesn't mean your body never changes.
Changing appropriately is part of how your body stays healthy.
Which raises an entirely different question when you aren't feeling well.

Instead of only asking:

"Which part is broken?"

we can also ask:

What has this body been adapting to?

Stop fighting the body. Start changing the conditions.

None of this means there is one magical “root cause” behind every symptom.

There isn't.

It also doesn't mean you can think your way out of illness, meditate away disease, or replace appropriate medical treatment with better habits.

But it does give us somewhere useful to look.

Instead of treating your body like an uncooperative machine, start becoming curious about the conditions in which that machine has been asked to operate.

- Is it getting enough protein and nourishment to maintain and rebuild tissue?
- Are you building and preserving muscle?
- Are you adequately hydrated?
- Are you sleeping—and are you actually recovering?
- Which people, places or obligations repeatedly put you on high alert?
- When do you feel genuinely peaceful?
- How often does your life allow that state to occur?

This isn't a checklist for perfect health.

These questions are meant to reset perspective.

Because perhaps your body doesn't need another punishment for failing to perform.

Perhaps it needs you
to **become interested**
in the **conditions**
you've been asking it
to survive.

A Different Relationship With Your Body

Your symptoms deserve appropriate medical evaluation.

Your diagnoses matter.

Your laboratory results matter.

Your medications may matter enormously.

But none of them, alone, is you.

You are an entire living organism—

constantly sensing, responding, adapting, spending resources, rebuilding and trying to meet the demands placed upon you.

So when your body stops behaving the way you expect, **resist the temptation to** immediately **declare war** on it.

Listen first.
Get curious.
Ask better questions.
Offer it nourishment.
Build its capacity.
Look carefully at the environment you're asking it to live in.
Make room for recovery.

And perhaps most importantly...

Stop requiring your body to function perfectly before you decide it deserves care.

Your body isn't failing you.

It may be telling you—quite loudly—that you've been barking up the wrong trees.

And maybe healing begins not with finding one more thing that's wrong with you—

but with finally learning how to **care for the whole person** who has been there all along.

If a physician who thinks about your health this way sounds like what you've been looking for —
we're here when you're ready.

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