

# Life as a *nutritional* *therapist*



IN LAST MONTH'S BRISTOL MAGAZINE, WE LOOKED AT TRAINING FOR A CAREER IN NUTRITIONAL THERAPY WITH THE COLLEGE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE (CNM).

NOW, FIONA CAMPBELL, A BUSY BRISTOL PRACTITIONER AS WELL AS BEING A CNM LECTURER, EXPLAINS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A PRACTICING NUTRITIONAL THERAPIST.



The concept of food as medicine was familiar to our ancestors, yet today we're so far removed from the reasons for eating and from the expectation that we should brim over with good health naturally, that many people are surprised to discover that even the smallest changes made to their everyday diet can result in significant improvements in their health and wellbeing.

"I see my role as a Nutritional Therapist as empowering my patients to make the dietary and lifestyle changes they need to help them achieve the very best health they can," says Fiona. "It's a

fantastic feeling to know that I personally have been able to change people's lives for the better. It's immensely rewarding to get feedback from patients who come to me with conditions including hormonal imbalances, weight issues, digestive problems, stress, joint problems and inflammatory conditions and who afterwards report that 'I've never felt this healthy' or 'I feel happier, my skin looks great and I have energy and enthusiasm'."

A family interest in natural medicine set Fiona on the path to becoming a Nutritional Therapist. "I myself am a former graduate of CNM. I was drawn to their course because I was keen on the naturopathic content which focuses on the holistic treatment of patients, and on its emphasis on practical clinical experience. Financially it also made sense because I was able to study part time and so could keep earning in the meantime. My CNM lecturers were inspirational. They are known to be of really high calibre so I'm very proud after these years to join their ranks! I love interacting with my Year 2 Nutrition students and dealing with their challenging questions.

"As a practitioner, I work across 3 clinics in the Clifton district of Bristol, and no two days are the same," says Fiona. "Every patient has a unique constitution and a different set of circumstances so the content of

my day could never be considered as routine!

"Patients complete a medical symptoms questionnaire and food diary prior to the consultation. Some people are shy about disclosing information on what they eat, but I'm not judgmental. We're faced with real people and if everyone was perfect they wouldn't need help!

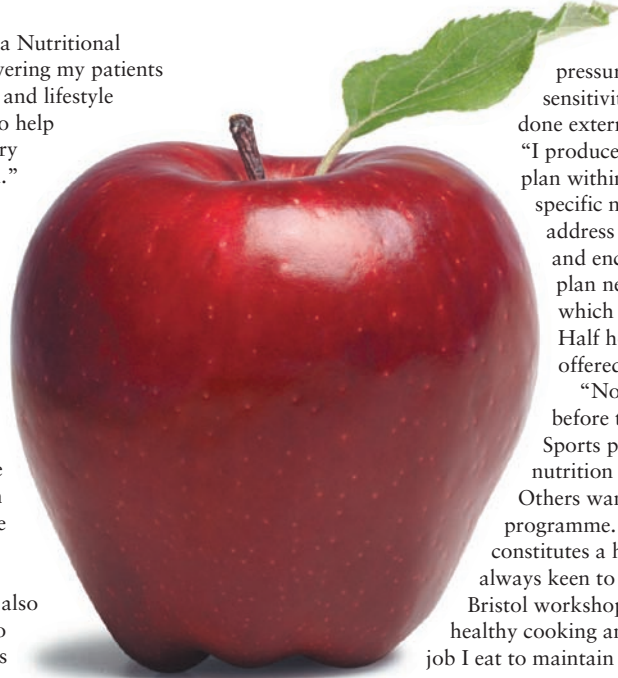
"The initial consultation lasts about an hour and is a chance to gain a detailed picture of the person's medical history, circumstances, diet and lifestyle, and goals for treatment. I have to know about the functioning of their digestive, cardiovascular and respiratory systems and about any

supplements or medications they are taking. I'm trained to carry out tests on blood

pressure, glucose, cholesterol and food sensitivity and additional tests may be done externally.

"I produce a full personalised treatment plan within 2 working days, including specific nutritional and lifestyle changes to address the individual's problems now and encourage longer term health. The plan needs to be simple and at a pace which is realistic for them to follow. Half hour follow up consultations are offered as required.

"Not everyone waits until they are ill before they come to see me, fortunately. Sports people consult me about optimum nutrition to meet their energy needs. Others want a twice yearly detox programme. Some want advice about what constitutes a healthy diet. I love food and I'm always keen to share a good recipe! I also lead Bristol workshops on healthy eating, gourmet healthy cooking and stress management. It's a good job I eat to maintain optimum energy levels!



To find out more about training for a new career as a Nutritional Therapist, come along to CNM Bristol's next free-to-attend Open Evening on Tuesday 25th October 6.30pm-8.30pm. To book your place call 01342 410 505.

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