

Healing With Magnets

By Gary Null, Ph.D.

With Vicki Riba Koestler

Biomagnetic therapy is not a new to everyone. Many veterinarians have been aware of biomagnetic benefits for years, and use magnets to heal fractures quickly, thereby saving the lives of racehorses and other animals. Doctors treating professional athletes commonly recommend magnets to speed up recovery from painful injuries. And other physicians in a variety of specialties, including dermatologists, internists, pediatricians, and surgeons, are seeing excellent results as well

That magnetic healing is nothing new can be seen by looking at early records of scientifically advanced civilizations, which tell us that magnetic forces have long been prized for their restorative properties. Ancient Greece discovered the very first natural magnet in the form of the lodestone, said Hippocrates, the father of medicine, noted its healing power. The Egyptians, too, described the divine powers of the magnet in their writings, and Cleopatra frequently adorned herself with magnetic jewelry to preserve her youthfulness. Chinese manuscripts dating back thousands of years describe the Eastern belief that the life force, termed *qi*, is generated by the earth's magnetic field. Today, many believe that certain places on earth, such as Lourdes, France, and Sedona, Arizona, owe their healing powers to naturally high levels of this *qi*, or biomagnetic energy.

Finally, no one claims that magnetic therapy is going to work for everyone. However, ample clinical and personal evidence suggests that people experience a beneficial effect. One is led to ponder whether when Hippocrates wrote, "The natural force within each of us is that greatest healer of all," he did not have magnetic energy in mind.

GENERAL USES

Relief from Pain and Discomfort. The most common use of magnetic fields is in the treatment of pain, with reports of successful treatment in a wide variety of conditions, including arthritis, rheumatism, fibromyalgia, back pain, headaches, muscle sprains, and strains, joint pain, tendonitis, shoulder pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and torn ligaments.

Reduction of Inflammation and Improved Circulation. Injured tissue emits a positive charge; placing the negative pole of a magnet over the area appears to restore a natural balance in the following way: The magnet improves circulation, allowing blood vessels to dilate and bring a greater volume of blood flow to the injured area. This helps to bring in natural healers and to remove the toxic by-products of inflammation-bradykinens, prostaglandins, and histamines-all of which contribute to inflammation and pain. Thus, pain and inflammation are diminished and tissue healing is stimulated.

Anti-microbial Effects. Magnetic therapy can help the body ward off such microbial invaders as viruses, bacteria, and fungi. It achieves this, in part, by increasing immune function through the oxygenation of white corpuscles, an important part of the immune system's arsenal.

Stress Reduction. The recent discovery of magnetite in the cells of the brain helps explain the calming effect of biomagnetic therapy. A magnetic field applied to the head calms as well as induces a hypnotic sleeping effect on the brain by stimulating the hormone Melatonin. Melatonin is known to be anti-stressful, producing a sedating effect in insomniacs. This finding has led to the manufacture of magnetic pillows and pads designed to provide a sound and restful sleep. A person can then awaken with more energy and fewer aches and pains.

Correction of Central Nervous System Disorders. Dr. William Philpott claims that biomagnetic therapy can help central nervous system disorders. He states that such symptoms as hallucinations, delusions, seizures, and panic can be alleviated through biomagnetic therapy without disrupting the patient's mental alertness and orientation. Also, a magnetic field may reduce the need for tranquilizers and antidepressants. Magnets have been used as well to stop epileptic seizures.

Energy Enhancement. It is believed that magnetic energy has the ability to penetrate all facets of the human body and reach every cell. That translates to greater energy and vitality throughout the body as a whole. Consequently, supplemental biomagnetic therapy can help revitalize the body.

Quicker Healing. The success of this therapy is attributed in part, to its facilitating the migration of calcium ions and osteoblasts to heal broken bones in less than the usual time. In addition, the migration of calcium occurs away from joints to reduce painful arthritic joint inflammation. The end result is the noninvasive promotion of natural healing, without the use of unnatural chemicals and drugs. Adequate magnetic energy also softens or eliminates scar tissue formed during the healing process.

Increased Athletic Endurance and Performance. The effect of increased endurance and performance is known, the cause is not definitively understood. It is felt that magnetic energy warms up the muscles and joints so that performance is increased. At least as important, serious injuries are reduced. In addition, it is known that magnetic energy increases blood flow to the muscles, thereby increasing strength at these work sites.

Specific Uses

Aging. Magnets activate life-promoting enzymatic activity, which, in turn, encourages normal cell division. This creates a healthier organism and may then slow down the aging process. Sleeping on a magnetic bed is an excellent way to accomplish this. Drinking magnetized water is another good habit to get into. Additionally, injured or weak areas of the body can be strengthened by applying magnets to these specific sites.

Amputations. Many amputees suffer from a phenomenon called phantom pain; i.e., they feel pain in a limb that was removed. Many of these patients have vascular problems. Research shows that in many, magnets can improve the flow of blood in the stump and cause phantom pain to go away.

Appendicitis. A northern or bipolar magnet can be placed over affected area. In advanced infections, however, you should not hesitate to call a doctor, as this is an emergency situation.

Arthritis. Magnetic therapy may be one of the most effective methods for achieving relief from arthritis, according to recent study published in the Journal of Rheumatology (November 1997, p.1, 200). Placing the North Pole of a magnet over an inflamed area on a regular basis may be a key factor in improvement, especially for arthritis in the hands and feet. Magnetic therapy may help reduce bone and tissue degeneration.

Asthma and Bronchitis. Wearing a strong neodymium magnet over the chest to cover the bronchial tubes and at an equal level on the may help these conditions. In addition, sleeping on a magnetic mattress pad can be beneficial. It may take several days before breathing returns to normal, and magnets can be worn continuously during that time.

Breast Fissure. Breast fissures are skin wounds that occur in women who are breast-feeding. Placing magnets over the wounded skin can help the fissure heal more quickly.

Burns. Magnets can help speed up the healing of all but the most serious burns. They are good to keep around the kitchen for burns received after touching a hot stove or picking up something that is scalding. Magnets should be placed over the site of injury. For slightly more serious burns, the use of magnets may help reduce the need for analgesics to control pain.

Cancer. Cells depolarize before becoming metastatic, and so one can speculate on how this approach may have been successful in those clinical cases that have responded to magnet therapy. When using magnets for cancer, remember the following rules of thumb: The magnetic pole used must be negative. The field should be larger than the primary lesion and the gauss greater than 25. Success rate increases if both the gauss and duration are increased. A minimal duration of twenty hours per day for no less than three months is required in most cases. The therapeutic effect is, in part, a result of the negative pole producing alkaline hyperoxia (abundance of oxygen). Cancer cells form their energy by making ATP in an acid anaerobic environment, which is termed acid hypoxia. Since the amount of information available on magnetic therapy with cancer is so limited, and since cancer is such a serious condition, one should never consider magnets as a sole therapy.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Magnets can be applied to the front and back of the wrist to help these hard-to-heal conditions. While the symptoms can be controlled with the help of magnets, one should not expect the condition to be automatically

Cervicitis. The Russians have designed magnets for intra-vaginal use to alleviate chronic cervicitis. They are placed in the vagina, next to the cervix. While this method may be useful for chronic cervicitis, it probably should not be used for acute infections, such as yeast infections.

Circulatory Problems. One can place magnetic strips along the forearm and sleep on a magnetic pad at night.

Depression. When magnets are placed over the head, they can help lift one's mood and promote relaxation.

Dermatitis. As magnets decreased swelling of any kind, they can be placed over any area of inflamed, red, itchy skin with favorable results.

Ear Pain. Magnets can be placed over the painful site. Medical advice should also be sought, though, particularly for children.

Endometriosis. This painful condition causes infection and inflammation inside the pelvis and is characterized by tissue irritation, inflammation, and pain. Women with infertility problems often suffer from this. Benefit can be realized through magnetic therapy, although it might take several months. In one study, good results were seen when 250-gauss magnets were placed over the lower abdomen for six to twelve hours.

Fibromyalgia. One should sleep on magnetic mattress pad and use a magnetic pillow. Magnets can also be placed over painful areas during the day.

Foot and Leg Problems. Magnetic insole will increase circulation and help conditions such as numbness, burning, aches, restlessness, and leg cramps. In addition, one should sleep on a magnetic mattress pad.

Head Injuries. Head injuries, even mild ones, can leave people with chronic, debilitating problems, many of which show up years later as headaches, memory disorders, chronic fatigue syndrome, eye problems, irritability, or other symptoms. Magnets placed around the head and neck can correct the electrical imbalance precipitated by the injury.

Heart Disease. Biomagnetic therapy may also undo blockages throughout the body, such as in the vessels of the lower extremities, the arteries in the neck, and the blood vessels in the hands and arms. By opening up a blockage in the heart, magnets may help prevent or improve ischemic heart disease, angina, and heart attacks.

Muscle Spasms. One of the major actions of magnets is to decrease spasms in muscles. If you pull a back muscle or you're under a lot of stress, those muscles may tighten up. Placing small round magnets or little block magnets over those areas can make a significant difference.

Muscle Strains and Sprains and Joint Pain. Local applications for these types of problems. Wear the magnet for several hours, and then take a break from it. Either wear the magnet all day and take it off during the night or vice versa. The same rule applies to joint pain. A magnet can be taped over the joint for a set period of time. Additional benefit can be derived if magnets are placed over corresponding acupuncture points.

Neuritis. A spine problem. Place magnets along the spine and arms.

Post-Polio Syndrome. Recently, a study was performed examining the effect of bipolar magnets on post-polio syndrome, a condition characterized by muscle tenderness and pain in patients who have had polio. The condition occurs years after the original damage from the poliovirus. Application of magnets to these tender, painful spots was shown to alleviate pain in this double-blind placebo-controlled study, the results of which were published in the November 1997 issue of the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.

Rheumatoid Arthritis. Magnets act as an anti-inflammatory, and therefore help some chronic inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Surgery. Some studies have shown that using magnets for twenty-four to forty-eight hours before surgery, over the site where the incision will be made, results in better post-operative recovery. Additionally, wearing magnets over a wound after the sutures have been put in can also speed up healing.