



December 19, 2011 – Pigeon Forge, TN

## Debate: My Answer

On Monday, I posed this question to get your responses:

*Why do you think the focus of physicians is geared toward only treatment and rarely prevention?*

I'm going to collate your answers for Wednesday's message: today I'll give you my answers.

One reason is that when we see the doctor, we seek treatment rather than information on how to prevent disease. For example, the longer we live, the greater the odds we'll face a disease that at one time would have been terminal. Today, there are treatments for those diseases—the operative word being treatment. So we wait and treat, rather than trying to prevent the diseases that are preventable. We eat whatever we want and gain weight, knowing there are medications to treat diabetes; we keep smoking and skip breast self-exams, knowing that if we get lung cancer or breast cancer, the oncologist can probably save us.

Another example is that we seek surgical solutions, not prevention information. Most people who've had serious injuries or joints that have worn out can have them replaced. Not that long ago, crushed bodies and arthritic limbs meant you would be in a wheelchair for life. Not so any more, but again, we seek treatment, not information on preventing disability.

But to me, the number one reason physicians focus on treatment instead of prevention is because we don't take prevention seriously ourselves. We don't think ahead 10 or 20 years. We don't change our diet or our weight or other aspects of an unhealthy lifestyle. We go to the doctor only when we're ill; we often don't even bother with annual checkups that could catch a problem in the early stages before radical intervention is required. It's great that we have so much faith in our doctors, but shouldn't we do more to help ourselves?

In short, we're just not doing our part for prevention. To me, that's why the focus of physician training is on treatment and not prevention. We'll see what you have to say on Wednesday.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

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