



IRIDOLOGY FOR TOTAL WELL-BEING

By Karen Siegel-Maier

Beth was losing her balance and falling. But the problem wasn't with her legs, it was with her ears. She had Meniere's disease, an aural disorder that causes tinnitus, a chronic ringing in the ears, and vertigo. Concerned, she went to her M.D. who prescribed Meclizine. Only the drug "made the problem worse, and me a space cadet," she says.

Seeking a viable natural solution, Beth consulted an Iridologist who told her that she had an allergy-induced inflammation that contributed to the tinnitus. The holistic healer also foresaw colon and arthritis problems, and a predisposition for cysts. "She was right on," recalls the 46 year old business teacher in San Diego, who had experienced episodes of colitis and fibroids and had two cysts removed within 24 months of her consultation. In addition, she zeroed in on Beth's sensitive personality and tendency to get hurt easily. "I found this unusual, because she correlated my personality with my problems. It was as if my personal reaction to things was causing my poor health." Armed with her Iridologists analysis, Beth then visited a homeopath who helped her gain control over her inner-ear disorder quickly.

The eyes are more than windows to the soul. They're reflections of your well-being. Hearty individuals usually possess bright, clear peepers. Dull, glazed orbs often signal illness or too many late nights with too little sleep. Iridologists, though, can see many more details. A growing number of natural practitioners believe that your irises are the road maps of your past and future, and Iridology, the tour bus.

What is Iridology?

By definition, Iridology is the study of the iris. With a quick look at your eye, experts can find inherent strengths and weaknesses of organs, gland, and overall health. They can also tell whether or not you have a predisposition to conditions like lymphatic congestion, toxicity, and inflammation of connective tissue. As holistic healers, they'll register your emotional proclivities too.

There are a lot of explanatory theories as to how Iridology works, but no concrete answers. One school believes that nerve fibers from every organ, gland and tissue extend to the nerve centers of the brain where messages are relayed to the optic nerves. Therefore, changes in the body show up as markings or discoloration in the iris. Others think that the eye is a map of the body's strengths and weaknesses but does not show specific illnesses. What these experts do agree on is that certain sections of the iris correspond to certain parts of the body with slight variations, like with acupuncture or acupressure points. For example, the position of 2:30 on the right iris is representative of the thyroid gland for most people. But some people's thyroid gland might appear at 2:00 or 3:00. And if you have an auxiliary connective tissue weakness, the corresponding area might appear wider than the norm.

At the same time, iris patterns are unique to each person, even between identical twins. In fact, eyeballs could be better than fingerprints to identify individuals. The iris has at least 253 different fields, while the fingertips have only 40, according to Bill Caradonna, ND, who has a private practice in Seattle and is a Past President of the International Iridology Research Association (IIRA). Yep, real life may soon catch up to science fiction, and your eyes (not your hands) may be scanned for positive

identification, like at automatic teller machines. Some European countries are already using eye scans, and pilot projects have started here in the U.S.

Basically, Iridology is an assessment tool. Studying the iris, when “tied in with our diet and lifestyle history, age, and emotional status, allows nearly a complete understanding of ourselves. There’s nothing else I know of that gives me the information I need to understand my patients on a deep level. Without the tools of Iridology I’d be working with one hand tied behind my back,” says Dr. Caradonna.

But this practice can’t fix the problem. You’ll still need to employ nutritional therapy, homeopathy, or other treatments to get well. Many Iridologists are also experts in these fields or work with other holistic healers to handle an illness. The good news is that Iridology is compatible with just about every other type of alternative- and even conventional medicine.

Does It Work?

Not everyone is enthusiastic about Iridology. In fact, much of the allopathic community questions its validity as a “scientific” measure of one’s health potential. A study published in the *Journal of Optometry* reported three leading Iridologists failed to pinpoint kidney disease with “statistical significance” in 143 subjects. Only 48 were ill, but the practitioners claimed that a whopping 75-88% of the group had kidney-related problems. Several other studies were conducted in the 1980’s that reported similar results, that this practice offers a “no better than chance rate of success at accurately diagnosing one’s state of health.”

But hold on: Iridology doesn’t claim to diagnose specific diseases. Since it primarily detects strengths and weaknesses in the body, it can’t be used to recognize the presence of gallbladder or kidney stones. Is Western medicine comparing apples to oranges when it comes to this practice? “All of the allopathic research has suffered from fundamental flaws in study design, along with attempts to apply outdated American Iridology approaches,” says Dr. Caradonna, who uses European methods in his practice. When research is properly designed (and Iridologists weren’t set up for failure) it shows how the eyes can truly tell us about the rest of our body. In an Australian study, practitioners were able to tell who had undergone tonsillectomies in childhood. “Trying to apply Western research methods is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole,” explains Dr. Caradonna.

European scientists are much more hip to Iridology than American ones. In Russia, for example, ophthalmic nurses and physicians are often trained in this practice. A recent paper published in a Ukrainian medical journal points out the efficacy of Iridology when used on Chernobyl accident victims and refers to Iridologists as having a “high informative value.” In Germany, where integrative medicine is widely accepted, Iridology is commonly used in conjunction with other disciplines as a preventative approach to health.

While scientific studies are being done globally, lots of Iridology’s support comes from anecdotal evidence, like Beth and Carol Geeck, ND, of Naples, ID. Born with a congenital hip disorder, Dr. Geeck endured a lifetime of failed surgeries and faced the possibility of wheelchair confinement. Then, in 1968, while recovering from hip and back surgery, a neighbor suggested that she see Bernard Jensen, ND, a chiropractor and leading Iridologist in the U.S. at the time. Because of her allopathic nurse training, Dr. Geeck scoffed at the idea of seeing him then. But decades of pain relievers, anesthesia, and countless synthetic drugs compromised her lymphatic system. “As I moved into my 40’s, I suddenly realized how miserable my body really felt. My irises were no longer blue but turning brown. I was overweight and constipated. As the old saying goes, I was full of it!”

It was in the 1980's that Dr. Geeck spotted *Iridology Simplified* (Bernard Jensen International) by Dr. Jensen in her local herb shop and took the book home. "I was so blinded by my early training," she admits, "but I proceeded to break down my ignorance and arrogance involving Iridology." Eventually she learned to apply Dr. Jensen's principles to herself and restored her health. Now on her way to earning a Ph.D. in nutrition, Dr. Geeck has been assessing irises for the past 11 years to help others get well too.

What's the History?

The idea of the irises as indicators of potential illness isn't a fad born of the New Age movement. Iridology's roots date back more than 2,000 years. But the practice went through its own Dark Age, and much of its wisdom was lost amidst historic turmoil. Modern Iridology has its origins in 19th century Europe and an 11-year-old boy.

As a child, the Hungarian physician Ignatz von Peczley wrestled with an owl in his backyard and accidentally broke the bird's leg. He noticed that the iris of the owl's eye had developed a dark stripe where there was none before. Intrigued, he wondered if this phenomenon would happen in people too. While he was working in a hospital, Dr. von Peczley observed the same occurrence in his patients and began to make detailed drawings of their eyes- the basis for many of today's iris charts.

While von Peczley is considered the father of Iridology, Dr. Jensen is credited with keeping the practice alive in America. He launched his career as a chiropractor in 1929 and later became one of the country's leading nutritionists. A devout advocate of studying the iris, he developed a comprehensive eye chart that was the prominent one for decades. He kept the Iridology message alive when allopathic medicine was pushing holistic therapies aside.

The political and economical climate of the time caused the U.S. to lag far behind the Europeans in this field. Because of a lack of alternative medicine research during the middle of the century, we don't have the same kind of information on natural medicine, especially Iridology, Dr. Caradonna points out. German doctors have been studying the iris and what it can tell us, and have taken Iridology to the next level. The mission of IIRA is to disseminate all of this new information to the growing number of American practitioners. In the meantime, the IIRA is also working on designing and funding original Iridology studies here.

There's really no reason not to see an Iridologist. Unlike many conventional diagnostic tests or exams, what you eat the night before has no bearing on an iris exam. Neither does your attire - no open-in-the-back robes handed out here. And the average cost of an Iridology session starts at around \$40, a small price to pay for such valuable guidance in maintaining optimal health.

Most people go to an Iridologist because they have symptoms that aren't improving, according to Dr. Caradonna, which is often due to conventional medicine's failure to address the underlying causes or recognize individual traits- exactly Iridology's strong points. "The iris is most useful when seen as a blueprint of our body," he says. "This allows us to understand individual characteristics, strengths, weaknesses and tendencies. In short, it can tell us why one person gets sick in a certain pattern and another gets sick in a different pattern."

And this isn't a do-it-yourself type of alternative medicine. You're better off going to a pro, "Iridology is quite an involved study. I wouldn't want to trust the ordinary person off the street who owns a flashlight and a magnifying glass to analyze my eyes or anyone else's," cautions Dr. Geeck. While finding some alternative healers who are credible is relatively simple with associations and organizations pointing you in the right direction, locating a qualified Iridologist isn't a walk in the park. In contrast to much of Europe, there are no official agencies or laws that govern the practice in

North America. So you may have to scrutinize credentials a bit more and ask detailed questions about your potential healer's background and schooling. The easier way: contact the IIPA for a referral at 888-682-2208 or iridologyassn.org. The IIPA is working hard to set the standard of practice on this continent. "Since Iridology education has been behind the times here," says Dr. Caradonna, "we started a meaningful certification program to train Iridologists and have certified instructors to teach across the country." The IIPA also publishes the Iridology Review that features articles and research material. "My session with a first-time client usually takes about two hours," says Dr. Geeck who also incorporates Sclerology, or looking at the white of the eyes into her practice. "I use a computer assisted eye camera to go over the iris and sclera in great detail and discuss inherited genetic predispositions. I take a picture of the iris and save it. Then I'll take the camera and videotape the sclera as I tell the client to move her eye up, left, right, etc.. And I'll question the client about their digestion and elimination practices. After the analysis I then go into nutritional counseling."

Conventional medicine may have trained you for an office full of machines and gadgets, but Iridologists have a few trusty ones that do just fine. Tools of the trade range from hand held magnifiers to cameras and slit lamps. These are the ones that Iridologists have been using the longest. The newest device is the computer-assisted live video camera that Dr. Geeck mentioned above. Some experts say that there are still some kinks that need to be worked out, but lots of Iridologists are incorporating it into their practice.

Maybe the old cliché is true: The eyes don't lie. Well, not about your health, anyway. But don't worry, your secrets are still safe with you. Whether you want to stay well or heal an illness, Iridology can help you find the right mind/body treatments. You'll not only uncover your body's natural reaction to an ailment but how your emotions will affect the healing process.

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