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Timing is everything

Timing is everything. Recently, I returned from a seminar on hormone balance and was amazed at how much our circadian rhythm plays with not just the cyclic rise of our humors, but their variations that occur from eating, exercising, working and sleeping at different times. For example, cortisone (cortisol) from our adrenals peak at 8 a.m. and melatonin from our pituitary at 1 a.m. We can surmise that most of our cholesterol is produced between 4 and 8 a.m. to supply the adrenal gland of this precursor to our adrenal hormones. Matching prescription drugs, tests and procedures to ones natural daily, monthly or even seasonal body rhythms may be smart



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medicine, too. All the cells, organs and systems of or body have their own regular rhythms of activity, patterns that are orchestrated by a "master clock" found deep within the brain. We can take advantage of these predictable variations in the body's operating rhythms -- the regular ebb and flow of hormones, daily cycles of cell growth and rest, as well as seasonal differences in mood -- through medial chronobiology (from the Greek *chronos*, meaning time).

For instance, studies have found some chemotherapeutic drugs to be both safer and more effective when taken at certain times of the day or night. The symptoms of common conditions such as asthma, arthritis, hay fever and angina vary in severity over the course of the day and target medications for times when you are most vulnerable. Someone with asthma might want to schedule their exercise sessions in the late afternoon when airways are open the widest, and time their medication to reach its highest concentrations around 4 a.m.