

## LIFESTYLE

### A practice that seeks to heal, not just treat



*Drs. Pamela B. Atkins and Floyd Atkins*

**By Kyrie O'Connor**

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In the shadow of the medical mega-churches that comprise the Texas Medical Center lies a small one-story house. A sign in front says it's the Center for Wellness & Healing.

Inside are the offices of Dr. Floyd Atkins and Dr. Pamela B. Atkins. If you come here, don't expect a typical doctor's visit.

For one thing, says Dr. Pam, expect that first visit to take, on average, two hours, so that she can find out about you and you can understand her approach.

The Atkins' approach involves no painkillers, no antidepressants, no little blue pills. Instead, if you sign on with them, you'll be asked to make major dietary changes, reduce the harmful chemicals in your life and find meaningful ways to reduce stress.

"It's not as financially rewarding when you don't pack the patients in, but it's so rewarding to the spirit," Dr. Pam says.

Both of the doctors began their careers in traditional medicine, Dr. Floyd as a podiatrist/foot surgeon and Dr. Pam in family practice.

Dr. Pam found that in a traditional practice she learned how to diagnose, but the treatment was always medication, with little thought to prevention and wellness. She still uses tools from traditional medicine - doing blood tests, measuring cholesterol, screening for thyroid issues - but now she sees herself as treating the patient, not the lab results.

"I think it's really been a spiritual journey," she says.

Dr. Floyd tells a story from his early days as a podiatrist, when he was doing a lot of diabetic foot care. A woman came to him with terrible foot sores and a recommendation from her doctor that her feet be amputated.



Michael Paulsen, Staff

*Dr. Pamela Brewer Atkins, left, and Dr. Floyd Atkins pose for a photo at the Center for Wellness and Healing, Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2013, in Houston. ( Michael Paulsen / Houston Chronicle )*

He worked with her for six months, but every time her feet came close to healing, she would relapse.

So he revamped his approach. He told her to change her diet, which had been traditionally Hispanic, to include many more raw foods and more antioxidants. "I gave her a long list of things to do," he says.

Three months later, when he was told she was in the office, he dreaded seeing her, fearing the worst. But instead, she showed him that her feet were healed. When he asked what she had done, she said, "I did exactly what you told me to do."

"You have to heal from the inside out," Dr. Floyd says. "You have to take care of the underlying cause, or you'll never heal."

Simply put, they treat the patient, not the condition. Dr. Floyd says that the way he used to practice, he wasn't really helping the patient in any meaningful way. "You can treat forever, but you heal one time."

For the record, the Atkins' practice what they preach, eating an 80 percent raw diet, exercising (Dr. Pam takes yoga class five days a week) and doing periodic cleanses.



Michael Paulsen, Staff

*Products sold by Dr. Pamela Brewer Atkins and Dr. Floyd Atkins' Center for Wellness and Healing, Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2013, in Houston. ( Michael Paulsen / Houston Chronicle )*

They look, in short, great. The day I visit, they offer me a drink made of beet leaves, ginger, fresh coconut water and pea sprouts. Fortunately, it tastes better than it sounds.

In addition to taking care of office matters, writing, promoting wellness and researching, Dr. Floyd is an ordained minister, and the Atkinses have raised a blended family of six children, two still at home. One is now in medical school. How did they do it? "To God be the glory," says Dr. Pam, a little wryly.

The doctors offer wellness and cooking classes to educate interested people in more healthful living and eating, and they develop their own skin-care and other products when what is on the market won't do. "If you can't eat it, you don't want to put it on your body," Dr. Pam says.

Dr. Floyd also stresses the importance of letting go of negative emotions such as fear, anger and lack of forgiveness, which he believes can eat away at the

body and leave it open to disease.

So, in short, take these steps: eliminate junk from your diet; drink clean, healthy water; eat alkaline foods (fruits and vegetables, mainly, and preferably organic); manage stress; get enough good sleep.

And the Drs. Atkins are still seeking. "I've been on this trail for 18 years, and every day I'm still learning new things," Dr. Floyd says. "I'm still connecting the dots."

## Comments - Mildred Burnside

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"If it had not been for Drs. Pamela and Floyd I wouldn't be here today. I am so grateful that God has lead me to them. I was diagnosed with Sjogren's pain in my knees, I could not sleep. I also had uveitis in my left eye this was 2008. Dr. Pamela told me change my diet and drink alkaline water. She also balanced my hormones. Dr. Floyd assisted me with a 40 day detox. My life has changed for the better. If anyone wants healing The Center For Wellness is the place to go."

Mildred Burnside - 2 days ago