

# **Millennium Medicine**

By

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Over the last millennium technological progress has accelerated to its present peak, and nothing has followed this advance as closely as medicine. Our understanding of our body and its failings has grown in parallel with our development of medication, surgical techniques, investigative testing and illness prevention. Current medical practices mean that we live longer, and we live healthier. As we reflect upon the huge advances in the fields of industry, transport, communication and commerce made over the past few centuries, astonishingly impressive as they are, they still haven't shaped our very destinies in the way that medicine has. Antiseptics, antibiotics, vaccination, transfusion... words that meant little or nothing 150 years ago are just basic fundamentals of your own medical vocabulary now.

As we cruise into a new millennium, we can guarantee that medical advancement is going to accelerate and we will see remarkable changes and innovations in medical practice over the next century. The "pipeline" innovations that we will see in the next 5 to 10 years are probably easy to predict, but what will the face of medicine look like in 50 or 100 years time? If ever there was a time for predictions, then the end of a millennium is one, so here are my impressions of what we will be taking for granted in 2055.

- Your personal computer, now known as a "domestic interface", will contain an industry standard "med-unit", just as they contain a modem now. You will go on-line to conference with your G.P., place both wrists within the units hand-cuff like receptors, and your G.P. will have instant diagnostics of temperature, pulse, blood-pressure, ECG. Open-wide and the minicam will zoom onto your tonsils. Of course where medically indicated, urine-analysis and blood count units will be issued for ongoing investigations. An actual face to face visit with the G.P. will still be a rare occurrence in the coming '50s.
- The synergy of man and microprocessor will be seen as micro-implantation becomes commonplace. If you are part of the right healthcare system, in early adulthood you will be implanted with 3 diagnostic micro-machines...one at the hypothalamus in the brain, one collaring a major artery, and one at the adrenal glands by a kidney. More complex instant diagnostics will now be available online as the microprocessors send their signals to your "domestic interface". Implants in the future will be something to be proud of, a sort of status symbol. The right companies will offer implants to the right people, just as they offer BMW's now. Early, and infallibly accurate, diagnostics will be one of the cornerstones to future medical success.

- Full genetic screening will be available before, or after birth, according to your ethical standpoint. Our genetic predispositions to certain medical conditions will be noted, and strategies to combat these will be implemented early. Recognition of future physical and intellectual traits will also be noted, and in some cases may appear on the newborns C.V. in later years.

The Technical Revolution sees a new found trust in all things researched, developed and proven by the techno-industries, and with this we will see the popularization of new techno-therapists. One example of these will be the “Nutrologists”, who will optimize your diet by identifying your own particular digestive systems traits and failings. On a visit to the Nutrology clinic, you will swallow a micro-diagnostic capsule within a meal sized mass of neutral cellulose matter, impregnated with a controlled amount of carbohydrate, protein and fat. The Nutrologist and his computer will track this device on it’s journey through your digestive system, taking regular diagnostic readings upon which he will base his no doubt expensive and exclusively available diet.

- Weight for weight the most valuable commodity on earth in 2055 will be an effective anti-biotic. The pharmaceutical conglomerates will spend millions in the competition to develop effective anti-biotics, and will make even more millions if they are successful. The release of a new anti-biotic will be hyped like a Speilberg movie is now; the medical trials will given media coverage almost like we give to major sporting series now, and release dates will be etched into our minds by constant advertising and pre-merchandising.

A successful anti-biotic cannot fail to make millions for it’s producers and investors, however it’s use will be strictly policed by the Worldwide Bureau of Medication. The use of anti-biotics will be licensed, monitored and controlled far more closely than the use of illicit drugs are now. The huge manpower and resources of the “W.B.M” will ensure that the vulnerable clinical “shelf-life” of anti-biotics, and the new anti-virals, will be prolonged by controlled supply, strict rotation of products, huge penalties for misuse, and massive research into bacterial and viral resistance. In the next century Germ Warfare will take on another meaning, as we fight against the germ and not with it.

These ideas may be predictions, but they are not fantasy. They are based on a natural progression of present day attitudes and technological direction. After all, we are leaving behind a century in which we learned how to replace hearts, and travel to the moon.