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## New Main Street Store Has Rx for Healthier Living

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*By Victoria Scott*



Dr. Marny Turvill opened Healthy Green Goods to give people the choice of using eco-friendly products like the cleaning supplies shown here.

The doctor is in. But she is on call at a different sort of clinic.

Dr. Marny Turvill retired last June from her medical practice at Evanston Hospital to launch Healthy Green Goods, 702 Main St., a store full of eco-friendly, toxin-free products for the home and body. Though on break ("at least temporarily," she says) from her career as a pediatrician, the doctor says, "I am very much using my medical training."

The store carries earth-friendly cleaning supplies, personal care items, bedding and linens, and clothing. Dr. Turvill says she believes these organic and non-toxic products are not only better for the environment but also better for the health of human beings than their conventional counterparts. Households with babies and children, whose "neurological and immune systems are not fully formed," have an especially good reason to use "healthy products," she says.

As a pediatrician, Dr. Turvill says she was often "frustrated by the number of children with chronic illness" and by a "medical establishment [that] is addressing [the problem] mostly by putting them on more medications."

At Healthy Green Goods she provides alternatives to products she deems dangerous and unhealthy. She sees the store as an extension of her professional work, another venue where, she says, "I have chosen to be the physician. I am still doing preventive health care, which is why I went into the practice [of medicine]."

Dr. Turvill's own experience led her to think organic. Plagued since adolescence by maladies of unclear origin, the doctor realized five years ago that she was suffering from symptoms of chemical sensitivity. By the time of her second pregnancy, she says it was "clear what was causing the problems. "Even small exposures to things made from petrochemicals made me sick," she says - cleaning products, things with synthetic fragrance, carpets, new plastic."

A year and a half ago she added inpatient and teaching duties to the clinic hours she had kept at Evanston Hospital since 1998. But, she says, "I was getting very sick." She realized the hospital's housekeeping products were the culprits.

Last spring Dr. Toni Bark, a fellow physician who had been running a store called Plan It Green from the former Tinkertoy factory at 1400 Sherman Ave., contacted Dr. Turvill about selling the business to her. "I said she was insane," says Dr. Turvill. "I didn't want retail."

Further conversation convinced her otherwise. "I realized I could make people aware of the dangers and provide them with an alternative education and a place to get products," she says.

While Dr. Bark's emphasis was on the environment, Dr. Turvill knew she would stress the health benefits of "green" goods. Within two months she had opened the shop at 708 Main St., above Trattoria D.O.C. Just a few months later she signed the lease on the street-level property she now occupies, with its high visibility and larger square footage.

Word of mouth is bringing in some customers who are relieved to be able to see, touch and smell products they could formerly find only in cyberspace, she says. Like her, she says, a huge number of Americans suffer from chemical sensitivities. But she says "only a fraction know" that their asthma, sinus infections, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, depression, arthritis, cancer, attention deficit disorder - and even autism - are "clearly exacerbated and often outright caused by chemicals."

Many people are frightened to admit to their sensitivities, she says, suspecting that addressing them could require vast changes in their lifestyles.

But although Dr. Turvill says the solution to her own health issues was a "radical overhaul of the house" to eliminate toxicity, she says such drastic measures are not always necessary.

Because everyone has a different degree of chemical sensitivity - and few can afford to remediate their entire home - she recommends that generally healthy people begin modestly, by making a gradual

change to non-toxic cleaning products. "When you run out, buy a healthy alternative," she says. "Every step helps."

The next step, she says, "depending on your illness," would be to redo the bedroom. "It's the place you spend the most time, or the time you are supposed to be rejuvenating," says Dr. Turvill. Healthy Green Goods has organic and all-natural mattresses, pillows and mattress toppers, as well as sheets, blankets and duvets.

Organic items are still considerably more expensive, she says. But they are increasingly available ("Five years ago it was painful to find stuff," she says), which she suspects will eventually bring their prices down.

Dr. Turvill says she thinks the time is right for her store. "Al Gore's [Oscar-nominated documentary] movie really made people wake up," she says, "and accepting one thing opens the door to re-examining others." If people believe global warming is real and there is a way to fix it, she says, they can admit that chemicals are damaging the earth and the atmosphere.

"Evanston is a great community for [the store]," says the Evanston-born and -educated physician. "[Evanstonians] are open-minded."

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