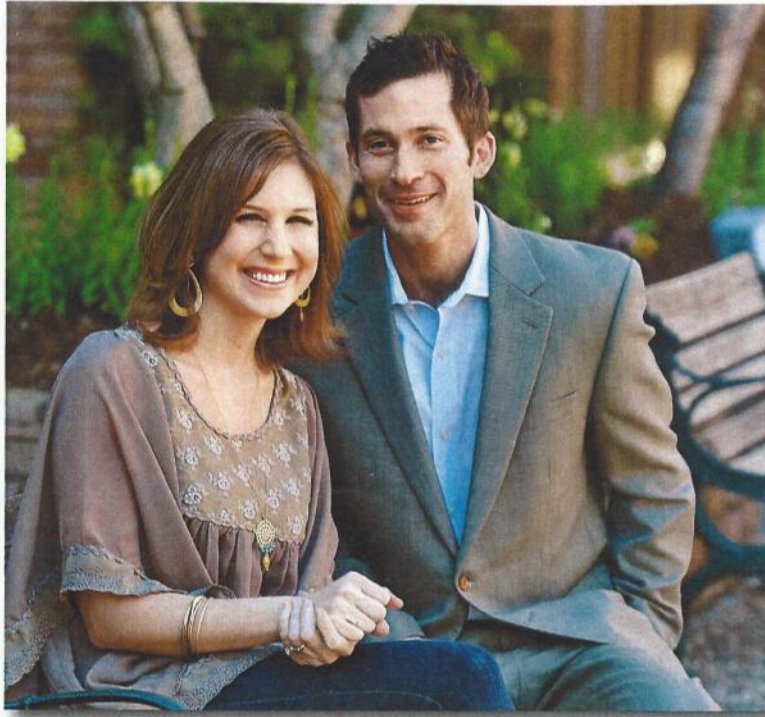


Story by Clancy Mitchell;
Photos by Melanie Thortis

THE FLAVOR DOCTOR

Jackson native Dr. Chad Rhoden, M.D., PhD, has taken issue with high blood pressure and has gone beyond simply treating Mississippians with the condition. In fact, he has made it his cause célèbre with his book "Bringing Down High Blood Pressure," published in 2010 and co-authored with nutrition specialist Sarah Schein, and by creating his own salt-free seasoning, Flavor Doctor, now sold in specialty food stores around the state and online.

A certified nutrition specialist, Chad's interests are in applying sound nutrition to the health of people in general. When his father, Dr. Richard Rhoden, suggested the idea of formulating a salt substitute, Chad rolled up his sleeves and went to work in his own kitchen.



Dr. Rhoden with his wife Rhonda

“Mississippians are at the top of the list of prevalence of heart disease and strokes in general.

These conditions can be modified through lifestyle.”

– Dr. Chad Rhoden, M.D., PhD

“The idea for Flavor Doctor came from the excess sodium consumption that we see, particularly in Mississippi,” explains Chad.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, Mississippi has one of the highest mortality rates due to stroke and is number one in mortality from heart disease. High blood pressure and obesity contribute to the risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

“Mississippians are at the top of the list of prevalence of heart disease and strokes in general,” says Chad. “These conditions can be modified through lifestyle, and Flavor Doctor was created to provide people with an option to consume less sodium and not sacrifice flavor.”

Dr. Wayne Woo, a certified diabetes educator at the Diabetes & Endocrine Institute in Flowood, met Chad at a speaking engagement on hypertension about a year ago. Afterwards, the two had lunch and Chad introduced Dr. Woo to Flavor Doctor.

“I host a diabetes program which focuses on treating the disease by integrating lifestyle changes, and a lot of my patients have high blood pressure,” explains Dr. Woo. “I have an interest in nutrition, and I have introduced Flavor Doctor as an option for diabetes management.”

Flavor Doctor is currently displayed in Dr. Woo’s clinic. His wife recently cooked a meal using the salt substitute and distributed it to patients in the clinic where it was very well received.

“People in the South eat a lot of salt,” says Woo. “If I can introduce things in my clinic to encourage people to reduce salt intake while not sacrificing flavor, then why not?”

“Taste is an issue,” adds Chad. “If something doesn’t taste good,

people are not going to do it. This not only tastes good, but it is healthy, and it is something that I can work on passionately.”

Chad grew up around medical doctors with both his parents being physicians.

“I felt like this is the way that I was being called to serve the public and also have a supportive career,” he said. “My idea of medicine is an all encompassing approach. This is one reason I studied public health, because there is a lot that can be done outside of the hospital setting.”

Chad attended the University of Mississippi Medical Center and the University of South Carolina and is board certified in preventive medicine and public health. In addition, he trained at the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas. He is currently in the process of developing a program with Madison River Oaks Hospital, which will enable him to make a larger contribution to the Jackson Metro area in health and nutrition.

“There are things we can do to improve our health in general,” Chad adds. “Low sodium diets and exercise are ways we should all follow, not just those who have certain health conditions.

“What I do to stay healthy is first, I try to lead a Christian life and make time to be with my wife and children. Besides these, I exercise, eat well, get good sleep and try to limit stress.”

An avid tennis player, Chad embraces the lifestyle he promotes to his patients.

“I certainly encourage others to find an enjoyable way to get physically active, whether it is running, swimming, biking or tennis,” he said. “The important thing is to stay active.”