

## Your Health: Should I Try Complementary Medicine?



Making health decisions is part of life. These decisions can have a big effect on your health and happiness. Some decisions may affect how good your health care is. Most people feel better about their health care when they take part in these decisions.

This information will help you understand your choices, whether you take part in the decision or ask your doctor to decide. Your decision should be based on the medical facts as well as your own feelings.

### Your choices

- Stick with traditional medical treatment.
- Add complementary medicine to your treatment or wellness plan.

Complementary medicine options include acupuncture, hypnosis, yoga, massage, and herbal remedies.

### Key points in making your decision

- Ask your doctor about any complementary medicine you want to try. Although there may be no proof that it works or is safe, some of it has been used for hundreds of years.
- Before you begin any such treatment, be clear about what it can do for you. Know what the risks are.
- Part of complementary medicine is listening to and touching people in a healing way. Some people find great comfort in touching. Others are not comfortable.
- Your insurance company may not cover the costs of this kind of treatment.

### What are the risks of complementary medicine?

- The greatest risk is that you will not see a regular doctor about your problem. "Complementary" means adding to your medical treatment, not taking the place of it.
- This kind of medicine is not regulated as closely as regular medicine. Stay away from people who want a lot of money up front, promise quick results, or warn you not to trust your doctor.

## What are the benefits of complementary medicine?

- Most practitioners stress that your mind and body are connected. Many people like working toward their overall health instead of just getting help for a certain problem.
- People who try this kind of medicine often feel more involved in their own health care.
- In some cases, it works as well as regular medicine. But you should not use any complementary medicine without checking with your doctor first.

Think about the facts and about what matters most to you. To help with your decision, take this information to your doctor and talk with him or her about your thoughts and feelings. Ask for more information if needed.

Reasons to try complementary medicine	Reasons not to try it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You want your health care to be more personal and to treat you as a whole person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard treatment is based on scientific evidence with proven results.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular medical treatment has not helped your ongoing problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of these treatments cost a lot.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking into this kind of treatment makes you feel like you are taking greater control of your health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are satisfied with the results of your regular medical treatment.</li> </ul>

Circle the answers that best apply to you.			
I'm satisfied with the treatment I'm getting from my doctor.	Yes	No	Unsure
I am worried that there is not much proof that it works.	Yes	No	Unsure
I like the idea of treating the whole person.	Yes	No	Unsure
I am comfortable with physical contact from someone who practices this kind of medicine.	Yes	No	Unsure
I worry that it might interfere with my current treatment.	Yes	No	Unsure