

What is complementary medicine?

Complementary medicine is treatment you use **along with** your standard care. This type of treatment includes:

- Acupuncture.
- Yoga.
- Herbs and other natural health products.
- Massage.

Many people use this type of treatment as they feel complementary medicine and seeing their doctor provides well-rounded care.

How can you use these treatments safely?

- Tell your doctor if you use or want to use this type of treatment. You may put your health at risk if you use only this type of treatment or if you stop your standard treatment.
- Don't use these treatments instead of standard care. You may miss important treatment that could save your life.
- Read the research to make sure that the treatment you want to try is safe and works for your health problem.

Know the risks

- Those who practice these types of treatment may not need a license. Each province may have its own rules for licensing.
- Companies may make herbs and other natural health products in different ways. Because of this, how well they work or their side effects may differ among brands. They may even differ within different lots of the same brand, as the label may not be accurate.
- Herbs and other natural health products may cause side effects. They may trigger allergic reactions or interact with other medicines or natural health products.
- Your health plan or private insurance may not cover this type of treatment.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

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