

Alternative Medicine

1. What is alternative medicine?

Alternative medicine is a term used to describe many different kinds of health care including herbs, supplements, acupuncture, and relaxation exercises. People use alternative medicine for many reasons. Some reasons include controlling pain, de-stressing, or help making difficult changes like quitting smoking.

2. What are some examples of alternative medicine?

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic and Osteopathic manipulation
- Homeopathy
- Naturopathy
- Tai Chi and Qi Gong
- Traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic (Hindu) system of medicine
- Yoga
- Dietary supplements like vitamins, minerals, amino acids, fish oils, herbs, and other plants

3. How can I use alternative medicine safely?

Alternative medicine has benefits. It's also important to know alternative medicine can cause harm or prevent other medicines from working.

Before using alternative medicines:

- Talk to your doctor
- Select a reliable healthcare provider. Check the status of their license at www.dca.ca.gov/consumer/wll.shtml
- Check the FDA safety warnings and recalls at www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/default.htm
- Be on the alert for scams. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

4. What should I ask my doctor about alternative medicines?

Talk to your doctor before giving dietary supplements to your kids or taking supplements if you are pregnant or nursing. Some questions to ask are below:

- Is the supplement or alternative medicine safe for me to take?
- Will the supplement or alternative medicine interfere with my other treatments or medicines?
- Are there any dietary changes I can make instead of/along with taking supplements?

5. What else can I do to protect my health?

It's important to engage in a healthy lifestyle including regular exercise and healthy eating. These healthy habits positively affect your health, body, and mind.



Key Points:

- There are benefits and harms with alternative medicine
- Talk to your doctor before using alternative medicine

For More Information:

Health Care Consumer Protection

Publichealth.lacounty.gov/hccp

For free fitness classes and acupuncture for pain management

The Wellness Center Los Angeles

www.thewellnesscenterla.org

213-784-9191

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