

# ALTERNATIVE THERAPY

*Parts of this fact sheet have been adopted from The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Alternative Therapies.*

In recent years, there has been a huge increase of interest in alternative medical therapies. Many aspects of arthritis can lead people to try alternative therapies.

People with arthritis must be careful when it comes to alternative therapies. Be sure to make informed and wise choices. Many claims are unproven, may be dangerous, and cost hundreds of dollars. Yet, alternative therapies are said to provide people with a sense of self-direction and control. There is more and more information available. Become informed. Work with your doctor about the best way to treat your arthritis.

The following information will help you become more aware of what you need to think about before trying an alternative therapy.

## DEFINITIONS

**Alternative:** Alternative simply means "other".  
**Conventional:** Conventional medicine, allopathic medicine, has been around for a rather short time.

**Traditional:** Traditional medicine has been around for centuries (i.e. Chinese medicine).

**Complementary:** Complementary medicine may be a better term than alternative therapy because this suggests working together with conventional medicine.

**Holistic:** Holistic medicine is also a term used to refer to treating the "whole" person - body, mind, and emotions.



## COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE - WHAT CAN AND CAN'T IT DO?

Complementary medicine can:

- Help you take an active role in your health care.
- Ease some symptoms, especially pain, stiffness, stress, anxiety and depression.
- Improve your outlook, your attitude, and the quality of your life.
- Work with conventional medicine to enhance the effects of both kinds of treatments, and promote wellness.

Complementary medicine can not:

- Treat most severe illnesses.
- Replace proven medical treatments.
- "Cure" chronic (unending) disease.