



# Complementary Health Approaches

PEBTF

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# Learning objectives

## Complementary health approaches

- Introduce types of complementary medicine
- Review examples of natural and mind and body complementary practices
- Learn the risks and benefits of complementary medicine

# Types of complementary medicine

- **Complementary**

- A nonstandard treatment or medicine that you use together with conventional treatment or medicine

- **Alternative**

- A nonstandard treatment or medicine that you use instead of conventional medicine

- **Integrative**

- A combination of standard medical therapies and complementary or alternative therapies about which there is scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness

# Practices used in complementary health approaches

## “Natural”

- Herbs (botanicals)
- Vitamins and minerals
- Probiotics



## Mind and body practices

- Acupuncture
- Massage therapy
- Chiropractic
- Meditation techniques
- Relaxation techniques
- Tai chi and Qi gong
- Yoga





Natural



# Natural: dietary supplements

- Natural products are often sold as dietary supplements, which are substances you can eat or drink
  - Vitamins, minerals, herbs or other plants, amino acids
  - Available in pill, capsule, tablet, or liquid form
  - Not a substitute for food
- They may contribute to health maintenance and well-being

***Always tell your doctor if you are using a dietary supplement or if you are thinking about combining a dietary supplement with your conventional medical treatment***



# Natural: probiotics

- **What are they?**

- **Bacteria** that may help to keep the natural balance of organisms in the intestines
- May be used to treat problems in the digestive system (diarrhea, gas, cramping)

- In the United States, probiotics are available as:
  - **Dietary supplements** (including capsules, tablets, and powders)
  - **Dairy foods** (such as yogurts with live active cultures)

**PROBIOTICS**

# Natural: probiotics

- Research has shown:

- Few side effects
- Some evidence that probiotics **may be helpful for acute diarrhea, antibiotic-associated diarrhea, and atopic eczema** (a skin condition most commonly seen in infants)
- While some probiotic formulations have shown promise in research, **strong scientific evidence** to support other uses of probiotics for most conditions **is lacking**

- Risks/concerns:

- Regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as food, not as drugs
  - **Has not approved any health claims for probiotics**
- Data on safety is limited (especially long-term)
- People with underlying health conditions may be at greater risk for serious side effects

**Probiotics don't appear to cause illness. More study is needed on the safety of probiotics in young children, the elderly, and people who have weak immune systems.**



# Mind and body practices

# Acupuncture

## Overview

- Based on the theory that **energy, called chi**, flows through and around your body along pathways called **meridians**
- A **certified acupuncturist** places very thin needles into your skin at certain points on your body
- May be used to **relieve pain and treat certain health conditions**
  - Use by itself or part of a treatment program
  - May be used to treat nausea and vomiting related to pregnancy, chemotherapy and some types of pain

## Risks/concerns

- In general, acupuncture is safe when done by a certified provider
- In rare cases, problems may occur – you could get an infection, especially if the needles aren't sterile
- Talk with your doctor if you have questions about the safety of acupuncture



# Massage therapy

- Rubbing the soft tissues of the body, such as muscles
- May provide short term help to reduce tension and pain, improve blood flow, and encourage relaxation

## • What are some types of massage?

- Swedish massage
- Deep tissue massage
- Self-massage
- Trigger point massage

- When done properly, massage is considered safe



# Chiropractic

## Overview

- Focuses on the relationship between the body's structure and it's functioning
- Mainly perform **adjustments to the spine** or other parts of the body
- Most research on chiropractic has focused on spinal manipulation – benefits low back pain
  - May be helpful for headaches, neck pain, upper- and lower-extremity joint conditions and whiplash-associated disorders

## Risks/concerns

- Side effects may include temporary headaches, tiredness or discomfort in the treated area.
- Rare complications such as stroke
  - Whether spinal manipulation actually causes these complications is unclear



# Meditation techniques: mindful meditation

- **Goal:** Focus your attention on the things that are happening right now in the present moment
  - Note what you experience without trying to change it

- **Benefits**

- Helps you relax and relieve stress

- **Practice**

- Sit in a comfortable position or lie down
  - Close your eyes
  - As you sit, pay attention to your breathing
  - Try to notice your thoughts and then let thought go, and bring your focus back present moment and your breathing



# Relaxation techniques

- Produces the body's natural relaxation response

- Slower breathing
- Lower blood pressure
- Feeling of increased well-being

- Common techniques

- Deep breathing
- Guided imagery
- Progressive relaxation



# Tai chi and qi gong

- **Moving meditation**

- Tai chi: Move body slowly, gently, and with awareness while breathing deeply
- Qi gong: Combines gentle physical movements, mental focus, and deep breathing

- **Benefits**

- May improve physical condition
- May improve balance and decrease risk of falls
- May ease pain and stiffness
- May improve sleep
- May improve overall wellness

- **Research suggests strong evidence of beneficial health effects, including: bone health, cardiopulmonary fitness, balance, and quality of life**

- Speak with your healthcare provider before practicing Tai chi or Qi gong



# Yoga

- **Mind and body practice** which combines physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation or relaxation
- **Benefits may include:**
  - Reduction of stress and anxiety
  - Lowering of heart rate and blood pressure
  - Improving physical fitness
  - Enhancing quality of life
- If you have a medical condition, speak with a healthcare provider before starting your yoga practice
  - Like any physical activity, yoga can cause muscle strains or sprains



# Complementary health approaches: risks vs. benefits

## Risks

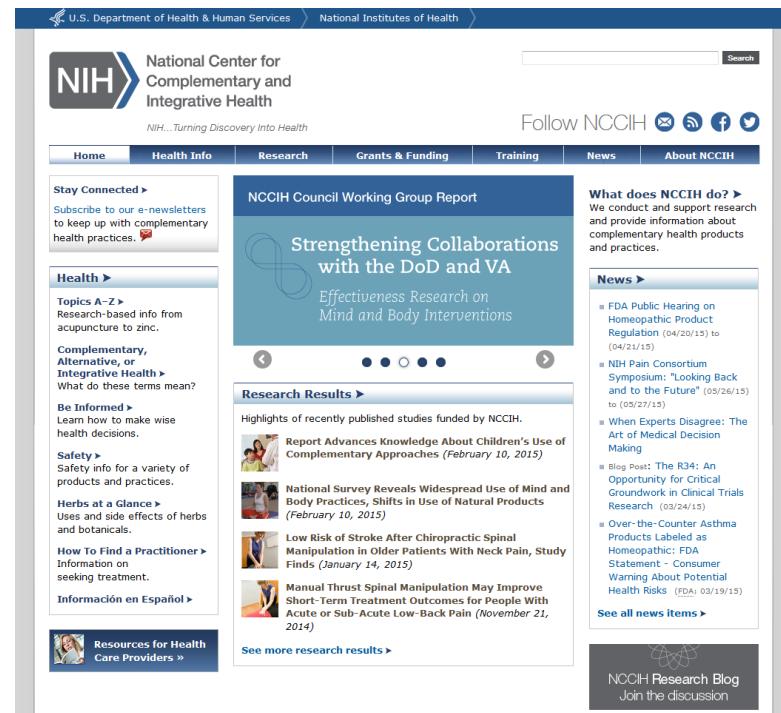
- Using these treatments **INSTEAD** of going to your regular doctor
- Some practices may be dangerous when combined with other medications.
- Not controlled as much as standard medicine
  - May be at risk for fraud
    - Require large up-front payments.
    - Promise quick results or miracle cures
    - Warn you not to trust your doctor

## Benefits

- Take a “whole person,” or holistic approach, to treatment
- In some cases, works as well as standard medicine
- Some feel more in control when they are more involved in their own health

# Is research being done on it?

- Many of these treatments have not yet been studied to see how safe they are or how well they work
- The **National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health** was formed to test the safety and effectiveness of these treatments
  - The Center has guidelines to help you choose safe treatments that are right for you
  - Visit: <https://nccih.nih.gov/>



# Summary

- Often used to complement, or in addition to, standard care
- Lack of evidence on safety and effectiveness
- Review the benefits and risks before using complementary medicine
- Always talk to your doctor before starting or using any complementary medicine
- Your insurance may not cover the cost of some treatments

# Visit MyActiveHealth today!

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videos,  
webinars,  
and more!

The screenshot displays the MyActiveHealth website interface. On the left, a sidebar menu includes Home, Dashboard, Health Library (with a green bar), Wellness Center (selected and highlighted in green), Videos, My Records, My Resources, and My Rewards. The main content area is titled 'Wellness Center' and features a 'Jan\_2016\_Go digital. Go healthy.' section with a video thumbnail of a person running, a bio for Sundance Wikander, and a 'Description' link. Below this is a 'Your Health Actions' section with three cards: 'Give Yourself Credit Rewards Center' (image of a trophy), 'Asthma: Pediatric Asthma' (image of a child), and 'Heart Health: Associated Risks' (image of a doctor with a stethoscope). Each card has a 'View All' link in the top right corner.



# Your Digital Coach has New Insights to Help You

- Do you want to learn more about your health? We have answers!
- Stay motivated on your journey to lifelong wellbeing



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Digital Coach website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a logo for "DigitalCoach ACTIVEHEALTH MANAGEMENT", a "MENU" icon, and a progress bar for "15/100 Heart Beats". Below the header, a large green banner says "Welcome to your Digital Coach". A subtext below it reads: "Designed to inspire, motivate and introduce healthy lifestyle changes to your daily routine. The Digital Coach features insightful articles, games, videos, and more to keep you on the path to a happier, healthier you." To the right of the banner is a photo of a woman smiling while holding a coffee cup. Below the photo is a section titled "Fit Physical Activity Into the Workplace". The main content area has a heading "SELECT A CATEGORY TO GET STARTED" and a "TRENDING TOPICS" section. Under "TRENDING TOPICS", there are links for "CHOLESTEROL Diet", "WEIGHT MANAGEMENT Boosting Your M...", "WEIGHT MANAGEMENT Tips for Maintaining...", "STRESS Work/Life Balance", and "CHOLESTEROL Cholesterol 101". Other categories shown include "Asthma", "Back Pain Management", "Back Pain Treatment Options", "CAD/ Coronary Artery Disease", and "Cancer Care". Each category has a "View Topics" button and a count of topics (e.g., 0/7 for Back Pain Management, 0/9 for CAD/ Coronary Artery Disease). At the bottom, there is a footer for "ActiveHealth MANAGEMENT" with a copyright notice: "©2014 ActiveHealth Management, Inc. Proprietary and confidential. Do not distribute."

## Some of the New Tools Include

- Articles, games, videos, and other engaging content on:
  - Coronary artery disease
  - Living a heart healthy lifestyle
  - Mindfulness

Visit your  
**Digital Coach** on  
**MyActiveHealth**  
to explore  
new content!

# Join Me In August!

On-Site  
Lunch  
n'  
Learns

- **Hurray for Fruits and Veggies!**
  - August 3 @ Reading State Office Building
  - August 9 @ Revenue Strawberry Square
  - August 16 @ Game Commission
  - August 17 @ Rachel Carson Building
    - 12:00 – 12:30pm
    - [www.pebtf.org/wellness](http://www.pebtf.org/wellness)

# Join Me In August!

## Webinars

- Sources of Energy – Carbohydrates, Fats, and Protein
- August 4 or August 18
  - 12:00 – 12:30pm
  - [www.pebtf.org/wellness](http://www.pebtf.org/wellness)



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# Thank you!



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