

# Deciding About Using Complementary Medicine

## How can you decide about using complementary medicine?

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### What is complementary medicine?

Complementary medicine is any nonstandard therapy that you use along with your doctor's standard care. For instance, you might get acupuncture. You may take dietary supplements. Or you may do yoga.

You may choose to add complementary medicine to your treatment or wellness plan. Or you may choose to use only standard treatment.

If you choose to use complementary medicine, use it along with treatment from your doctor. That way, you won't miss important treatment that could improve your health.

### What are key points about this decision?

- Many forms of complementary medicine have been around for hundreds or thousands of years. But there isn't clear proof about how safe many of them are or how well they work.
- Some therapies may affect standard medical treatments. For instance, some supplements might interact with medicines you take. They could cause harmful effects. Check with your doctor. Ask about therapies that you would like to try.
- Insurance may not cover the cost of some of these therapies. Check with your insurance company. Ask what they will cover.

### Why might you choose complementary medicine?

- You may feel more in control of your health.
- You may feel that you'll get better results by using these therapies along with your standard care.
- Your doctor may suggest that you try a therapy that has been shown to be safe.

### Why might you choose not to use complementary medicine?

- You may be content with your current standard medical care.
- You may feel that complementary therapy isn't worth the cost.
- You may take medicines that could be affected by herbal products or supplements.

### Your decision

Thinking about the facts and your feelings can help you make a decision that is right for you. Be sure you understand the benefits and risks of your options. Think about what else you need to do before you decide.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **W145** in the search box to learn more about "**Deciding About Using Complementary Medicine**".

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