

# **What is Integrative Medicine**



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# About Me



- Naturopathic Doctor – graduate of Bastyr University, a 5 year medical school program in Seattle Washington
- Licensed as a PCP in CT, do consultations at Full Circle
- My business is:



Westchester Center for Natural Health

Homeopathic and Naturopathic Care for the Whole Family

- Naturopathic medicine is at its core integrative – it brings together western medicine and science with traditional healing methods.

# Conventional Medical Model



- ***Conventional Medicine:*** The mainstream medical care practiced at most hospitals in the United States. Standards of care are set by government and regulatory agencies, and by individual health insurance companies. (dictionary.com)
- **Strengths**
  - Best for Trauma Care, “rescue medicine”
  - Preventative screening procedures
  - Advances of medical technology and diagnostic procedures
  - Covered by health insurance
  - Consistent, protocol based
- **Weaknesses**
  - Relies heavily on pharmaceutical medicine which have a lot of side effects, and invasive and/or expensive medical procedures
  - Often does not treat the underlying causes, focuses on symptoms
  - Does not have a ‘whole’ view, and does not focus on the individual

# Alternative Medicine



- **Alternative medicine** – approaches to health and healing that do not rely on drugs, surgery and/or other conventional medical procedures for treating illness.
- **Strengths:**
  - Prevention based - promoting health rather than fight disease
  - Encourages patients to take responsibility of their own health
  - Target the whole body, one part is never treated at the cost of another part.
- **Weaknesses:**
  - Lack of scientific support
  - Not consistent – every practitioner is different
  - Not covered by insurance

# Principles of Holistic Medicine



- First, do no harm; provide the most effective health care available with the least risk to patients at all times (*primum non nocere*).
- Recognize, respect and promote the self-healing power of nature inherent in each individual human being. (*Vis medicatrix naturae*, a form of vitalism).
- Identify and remove the causes of illness, rather than eliminate or suppress symptoms (*Tolle Causum*).
- Educate, inspire rational hope and encourage self-responsibility for health (*Doctor as Teacher*).
- Treat each person by considering all individual health factors and influences. (*Treat the Whole Person*).
- Emphasize the condition of health to promote well-being and to prevent diseases for the individual, each community and our world. (*Health Promotion, the Best Prevention*)

# A Bit of History



- At turn of the century – there were many differing schools of medicine – there was no ‘dominant’ model
- 1910 Flexner Report – issued by the American Medical Association – to standardize medical education, supported by Govt. Resulted in more than half of medical schools closing and a standardization of education. Medicine and its systems became monopolized by one model.
- 1970’s disenchantment with conventional medicine started to grow – alternative medicine has bloomed. Now, more than 2/3’s of Americans use some form of alternative medicine.

# Integrative Medicine



- *Integrative Medicine*: Healing-oriented medicine that takes into account the whole person (body, mind, and spirit), not just the disease. It emphasizes the therapeutic relationship between provider and patient and makes use of all appropriate therapies, both conventional and alternative. (WebMD) This model of health care incorporates the **best of conventional evidence-based Western bioscience with evidence-based complementary therapies**, while minimizing the weaknesses of each.
- “CAM” – or complementary and alternative medicine
- Strengths:
  - Appealing to the Public, don't have to choose between two camps
  - Starting to get support from insurance, helps alternative medicine become mainstream
- Weaknesses:
  - ✦ It's just a term - used for just marketing
  - ✦ 'integrative' does not guarantee that an holistic principles are in place

# How do you make integrative model work for you?



## Options:

- 1) Find an Integrative Treatment Center— combine primary care with insurance with internal referrals for alternative medicine – acupuncture, nutrition, etc.
  - Full Circle Family Care
  - Cancer Treatment Centers of America
  - Greenwich Center for Integrative Medicine
- 2) Find a primary care doctor who is open to alternative medicine. Do research to find the right alternative practitioners for you.

# Finding the Right Alternative Practitioner



- Educate yourself on the options – choose an approach in which you have confidence
- Find a practitioner whom you can communicate openly and have good rapport
- Find someone who is sensitive to your needs and circumstances
- Do they have a good educational background
- Are they rigid about their philosophy. Be careful with people dogmatism.

# MANY Types of Alternative Practitioners



- Holistic/Integrative MD's (medical doctors), DO's (osteopaths) or RN's (nurses) – may focus on functional nutrition, homeopathy, craniosacral therapy as well as conventional medicine
- Naturopathic Doctors – trained in western biomedicine and the therapeutics of natural medicine (botanical medicine, homeopathy and nutrition)
- Midwives – specialists in women's health, pregnancy
- Nutritionists and holistic health coaches– coach you through healthy lifestyle eating habits and nutritional supplements
- Chiropractors – focus on musculoskeletal alignment, some do nutrition, applied kinesiology, cranio-sacral therapy
- Traditional Chinese medicine and Acupuncture
- Ayurvedic practitioners/doctors – traditional medicine of India
- Herbalists – western herbs, Aromatherapists
- Massage therapists, Rolfing practitioners, Reflexology
- Reiki practitioners, Healing touch,
- Counselors, psychologists, hypnotherapists, social workers
- Holistic Dentists – safer, less toxic dental work, removal of Hg amalgams
- AND MORE!!



## SOME TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

- Nutrition
- Botanical Medicine and Aromatherapy
- Homeopathy and Flower Essences
  - Chiropractic/Body work
    - Energy Medicine
      - Acupuncture
      - Detoxification
- There's more, these are some main categories.

# Nutrition



## Nutrition

1) **FOOD BASED** – overall focuses on creating a healthier diet for healing and prevention

- SPECIFIC DIETS- Anti-Inflammatory Diet, Elimination Diet, Blood Type Diet, Detox diets, Vegetarian Diet, Vegan Diet, Raw Food Diet, Atkins Diet, Low Carb Diet, Etc.

OVERALL THEME: eat better quality food, less junk, more vegetables, more variety, less dairy, wheat, unhealthy fat, and red meat

PROS: no side effects, preventative, can be more ecological

CONS: choosing the right diet is confusing, relies on cooking – needs time, discipline, patience

2) **SUPPLEMENTS** – since we don't get nutrient rich foods.

- ✦ For overall support – multivitamin, fish oil, probiotic, cal/mag
- ✦ For specific support – to support specific systems and conditions
- ✦ Usually oral capsules, powders, liquids, but also via I.V.

PROS: can be very effective, people who take multivitamins live longer

CONS: expensive, people take more supplements than they need, confusing, a lot of 'trends'

\***Functional Medicine** – often involves specific functional lab tests to find deficiencies and specific nutrient support. Tends to be expensive and heavy on supplementation, but very effective.

# Botanical Medicine



**Botanical Medicine** – Plant medicine – usually for specific conditions or to strengthen certain systems of the body. Teas, tinctures, capsules, Either alone or in formulation.

There are different systems of diagnosis.

- Western herbalism looks at systems of the body, symptom specific. Uses a lot of everyday, common herbs that you grow in your garden.
- Chinese herbalism is based on organ and channel diagnosis, look at pulse, tongue. More complex formulation than Western herbs. Have to be careful of source of chinese herbs (be careful of heavy metals).
- Ayurvedic herbalism of India – based on three constitutions – Vata, Pita, Kapha – a lot of food based herbalism (using spices in foods)

**PROS:** Generally safe. Ecological.

**CONS:** Difficult to be compliant with - often needs high and frequent dosage. Can taste bad/bitter. Can be expensive.

# Homeopathy and Flower Essences



- **Classical Homeopathy**
  - Highly dilute substances using the principle of 'like treats like'
  - Can treat mental, emotional and physical at the same time
  - Finding a specific remedy to fit a person's constitution
- **Combination Homeopathics**
  - Combinations of remedies – such as teething tablets, Calms Forte, etc
  - Drainage remedies – combination remedies specific for detoxification
- **Flower Essences –**
  - Highly diluted flowers used to treat on the emotional level
  - Ex: Bach Flower essences, Rescue Remedy
  
  - PROS: Very safe. Can be very effective and get at the root of the problem if done correctly. Supports the body's own healing process.
  - CONS: Takes time. Subtle, may not notice the effects.

# Chiropractic Medicine and Body Work



- Chiropractic Medicine – restoring the structure and integrity of the spine and its nervous system
- Massage Therapy
- Rolfing
- Reflexology

# Subtle Energy Work



All of these therapies recognize that there are subtle energies, and rhythms, that operate in systems that conventional medicine does not recognize. Requires the practitioner to be very sensitively attuned to these subtle energies.

- Acupuncture
- Cranio-sacral Therapy
- Visceral Manipulation
- Reiki
- Therapeutic Touch