

# Complementary and Alternative Therapies

Canadians are interested in complementary and alternative therapies and often consider including them in their cancer treatment. The decision to use a complementary or alternative therapy is a personal one, but if you are thinking about trying a complementary or alternative therapy, be sure to make an informed choice.

## **Making an Informed Choice Means:**

- Understanding the difference between conventional, complementary, and alternative therapies
- Finding out as much as you can about the complementary or alternative therapy and how it may interact with the medication you are receiving.

## **Conventional Therapies**

Conventional therapies are the treatments that are currently accepted and widely used in the Canadian healthcare system for a certain type of disease. Physicians prescribe these treatments because the best available scientific research has shown them to be safe and effective.

These methods have been scientifically tested, and are constantly being improved, in well-designed clinical trials that explore whether the medicine or treatment is safe and whether it works for a particular disease or medical condition.

## **Complementary and Alternative Therapies**

There has been very little scientific research done on complementary and alternative therapies, so we often don't know whether they are safe and we don't know whether or how they help people with cancer.

Whether a therapy is considered to be complementary or alternative depends on its purpose or how it is used.

Information obtained from [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

See Complementary and Alternative Therapies Pathfinder under 'Finding things on the Web'