



Medicine-related terminology

Conventional medicine: A system in which medical doctors and other health care professionals (such as nurses, pharmacists, and therapists) treat symptoms and diseases using drugs, radiation, or surgery. Also called allopathic medicine, mainstream medicine, orthodox medicine, Western medicine, and standard treatment.

Dietary supplement: A product that is added to the diet. A dietary supplement is taken by mouth, and usually contains one or more dietary ingredients. Also called nutritional supplements.

- Examples: vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, enzymes

Dose: The amount of medicine taken, or radiation given, at one time.

- Examples: 800 mg of ibuprofen, 200 cGy (centigray) of radiation

Health care team: All of the individuals involved in the management of your care. Team members include, but are not limited to, doctors, nurses, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and social workers, as well as acupuncturists, massage therapists, nutritionists, and chiropractors.

Herbal supplement: A product made from a plant that is thought to be useful in promoting health. Herbal supplements are taken by mouth and are considered a type of dietary supplement.

- Examples: ginger, milk thistle, turmeric

Over the counter (OTC) medicine: A medicine that can be bought without a prescription (doctor's order). Also called nonprescription medicine.

- Examples: aspirin, acetaminophen

Prescription: A doctor's order for medicine or another intervention.

Side effect: A problem that occurs when treatment affects healthy tissues or organs.

- Examples: fatigue, pain, nausea, vomiting, decreased blood cell counts, hair loss, mouth sores

Standard medical care: Treatment that experts agree is appropriate, accepted, and widely used. Also called best practice, standard of care, and standard therapy.

Vitamin: A nutrient that the body needs in small amounts to function and stay healthy. Sources of vitamins are plant and animal food products and dietary supplements.

- Examples: vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E



CAM Categories:

Alternative Medical Systems: Systems built upon complete systems of theory and practice. Often, these systems have evolved apart from and earlier than the conventional medical approach used in the United States.

- Examples: Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Ayurveda

Complex Natural Products: An assortment of plant samples (botanicals), extracts of crude natural substances, and extracts from marine organisms used for healing and treatment of disease.

- Examples: Herbs and herbal extracts

Energy Therapies: Therapies that involve the use of energy fields. Two types of energy therapies are biofield therapies and electromagnetic-based therapies.

Biofield therapy: A type of energy therapy that is intended to affect energy fields that purportedly surround and penetrate the human body. The existence of such fields has not yet been scientifically proven.

- Example: Reiki

Electromagnetic-based therapy: A type of energy therapy that involves the unconventional use of electromagnetic fields.

- Example: Magnet therapy

Exercise Therapies: Health-enhancing systems of exercise and movement.

- Example: Yoga

Manipulative and Body-Based Methods: Methods based on manipulation and/or movement of one or more parts of the body.

- Example: Massage

Mind-Body Interventions: A variety of techniques designed to enhance the mind's capacity to affect bodily functions and symptoms.

- Example: Meditation

Nutritional Therapeutics: An assortment of nutrients, non-nutrient bioactive food components, and specific foods or diets used as cancer prevention or treatment strategies.

- Example: Vegetarian Diet

Pharmacological and Biologic Treatments: Treatments that include the off-label use of certain prescription drugs, hormones, complex natural products, vaccines, and other biological interventions not yet accepted in mainstream medicine.

- Example: Melatonin

Spiritual Therapies: Therapies that focus on deep, often religious, beliefs and feelings, including a person's sense of peace, purpose, connection to others, and beliefs about the meaning of life.

- Example: Intercessory praying