

Integrative Medicine

– much more than simply Complementary or Alternative Medicine

A Movement Whose Time Has Come

What has come to be called integrative medicine is a rapidly growing and highly credible field that seeks to integrate the best of Western scientific medicine with a **broader understanding of the nature of illness, healing and wellness.**

In seeking to return the soul to medicine, integrative medicine is grounded in the healing relationship—practitioners and patients share information as well as compassion as together they seek ways to achieve optimal health. This approach to giving **care focuses on healing the whole person and addresses a person's body (one's physical self), mind (one's mental and emotional state), spirit (one's personal connection to the transcendent), and community (one's web of relationships and environment).**

Informed by evidence, integrative medicine makes use of all appropriate therapeutic approaches, healthcare professionals and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing and strives to achieve wholeness and health as well as cure illness and disease. Because an informed, empowered patient will make better choices about his or her healthcare and lifestyle options, patient education is an essential element of integrative care.

The philosophical foundation for the integrative medicine comes from a multitude of different medical and human science traditions. For example, **the idea that a person should be treated in his or her wholeness—mind, body and spirit—is a fundamental premise within integrative medicine that has been informed by the patient-centered care movement, holistic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic medicine, homeopathy, and the medicine of the ancient Greeks as well as modern humanistic and transpersonal psychology.** Prevention, an important aspect of integrative medicine, is grounded in medical science but it also draws from the fields of nutrition, stress management, physical fitness, and environmental health. This "gathering" of human wisdom in an effort to care for individuals in the best way possible is a key factor in why integrative medicine is both effective and desirable.