Complementary Treatment and Therapy for Symptom Management

Complementary and Alternative Medicine also called CAM, includes treatments and therapies that may be used along with standard medical care. Some CAM therapies include the use of natural products such as herbs, vitamins or minerals. Other CAM therapies may include mind-body practices such as yoga, acupuncture, energy therapies, meditation or massage therapy. CAM therapies may help with symptoms such as insomnia, pain or fatigue. It may also help to support emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. This handout gives you information about some of the common CAM therapies.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a form of traditional Chinese medicine. This treatment is used to help reduce symptoms caused by health problems. Acupuncture uses tiny needles, pressure or heat on certain pressure points of the body. Acupuncture may help to reduce pain, nausea, stress or some arthritis conditions.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants to help support emotional, physical or spiritual well-being. Essential oils may help control symptoms such as insomnia, pain, stress, nausea, fatigue, or a loss of appetite.

Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic care is used to treat problems with the body’s bones, muscles and joints. A chiropractor is a health professional that can make adjustments to the spine or other parts of the body. This therapy may also use other treatments such as heat, ice, relaxation or exercises to reduce pain, improve function and help support healing.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

Reiki

Reiki ("ray-key") uses gentle touch to help support healing of the mind and body. A trained therapist places their hands above or lightly on different areas of the body to work with energy fields around the body. This therapy may be used to help you relax, reduce stress and energize your spiritual well-being.

Reflexology

Reflexology is done by a trained therapist who puts different amounts of pressure on the hands, feet or ears. This type of therapy may be used to help reduce pain, stress, anxiety, nausea, insomnia or fatigue.

It is important to talk with your doctor about your health condition before you start a CAM treatment or therapy.

How can I find more information?

The following websites provide information about CAM therapies:

- The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's Integrative Medicine  
  www.wexnermedical.osu.edu/integrative-complementary-medicine

- The National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health  
  www.nccih.nih.gov