

# Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) and Hepatitis C

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# Alternative (Traditional) Healing is not New

- Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine practices began at least 2,000 years ago and is practiced using the same theories about energy pathways in the body today.
- Ayurveda, the traditional healing practices of India, originated 5000 years ago.

# Alternative (Traditional) Healing is not New

- The medical practice of homeopathy began in the early 1800s in Europe.
- By 1900 there were 22 homeopathic medical schools, more than 100 homeopathic hospitals, and 1,000+ homeopathic pharmacies in the U.S.

# Alternative Medicine Is Not An Alternative

- In Africa, 80% of the population uses traditional medicine for primary healthcare.
- In China, herbal medicines account for up to 50% of all medicine used.

# Alternative Medicine Is Not An Alternative

- In Europe, North America and other industrial countries, over 50% of the population has used an “alternative remedy” at least once in their lives.
- Germany, over 90%.
- France, over 75%.
- Canada, over 70%,
- Australia, 48%

# Complementary & Alternative Medicine

- At least 45% to 60% of Americans use CAM.
- CAM is most commonly used for chronic illnesses.
- Americans make more visits to CAM practitioners than to primary care doctors.
- CAM is an important component of healthcare for millions of Americans, especially those living with long-term diseases.

# Complementary & Alternative Medicine and Hepatitis C

How can CAM modalities be used by people with chronic hepatitis C?

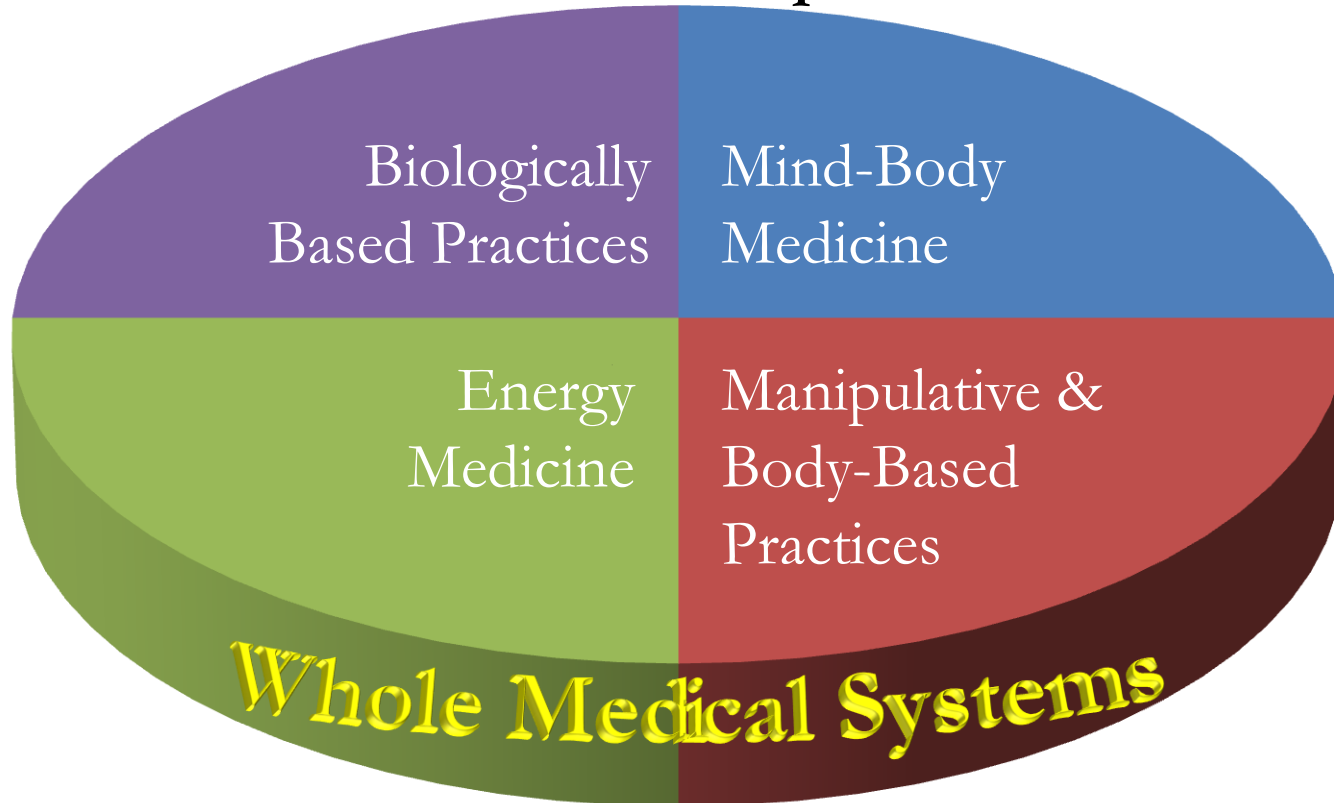
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# Complementary & Alternative Medicine

How can CAM modalities be used by people with chronic hepatitis C?



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# Biologically-Based Therapies

- Nutrient Supplementation- the use of nutritional supplements to optimize biological function
- Botanical Medicine- the use of plant extracts to improve biological function
- Diet Therapy- the use of specific dietary regimes to optimize biological function

# Mind-Body Medicine

- Reestablishes a healing environment with the body
- Start where you are
- How we think affects our physiology
- Empowerment to make changes that will improve the quality of life and well-being

# Mind-Body Therapies

- All healing modalities
- Stress reduction
- Community/Social/Support groups
- Meditation, Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong
- Positive mental attitude
- Calming the mind
- Exercise
- A healthy diet
- Lifestyle considerations

# Energy Medicine

## **Reiki, Qi Gong, Therapeutic Touch:**

- stress reduction
- pain relief
- increased ability to cope
- increased general health

# Manipulative / Body-Based Methods

## **Principles and theory of osteopathic medicine as an example of a body-based method:**

- Structure and function are interdependent.
- The body has the ability to heal itself, and the role of the osteopathic physician is to enhance the healing process as much as possible.

Diseases, impairments, and disabilities arise from disruptions of the normal interactions of anatomy, physiology, and behavior.

# Naturopathic Philosophy

- The body has the inherent ability to establish, maintain, and restore health.
- Identify and treat the underlying cause of disease.
- First do no harm.
- Treat the whole person.
- The physician is a teacher.
- Prevention is the best cure.

# Naturopathic Medicine

- Antioxidants: vitamins, minerals, flavonoids, IV therapy
- Diet: adequate protein, omega-3 fatty acids, low simple carbohydrate diet
- Sleep: addressing sleep debt
- Detoxification: rule out heavy metal/solvent exposure

# Naturopathic Medicine

- The liver is the body's primary site of detoxification.
- B vitamins, magnesium, zinc, copper, choline, betaine, methionine, taurine, and cysteine are needed for support detoxification processes.
- Supplements that improve glutathione availability (NAC, ALA, selenium) may help protect the liver from free-radical damage.

# Naturopathic Medicine

## Limiting Exposure to Potential Hepatotoxins

- Alcohol increases the risk of HCV-related cirrhosis and must be avoided.
- Acetaminophen use should be limited.
- Tobacco and recreational drugs should be avoided.
- Avoid exposure to pesticides, herbicides, heavy metals, and other toxic chemicals.

# Naturopathic Medicine

## Dietary Recommendations

- Eat a well-balanced diet with adequate intake of fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid a high-fat diet.
- Avoid excessive salt intake.
- Beware of iron overload.
- Avoid fad diets

# Naturopathic Medicine

## Nutritional Supplements that May be used in HCV

- *Silybum marinum* (milk thistle)\*
- *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (licorice root)
- Alpha-lipoic acid (ALA)
- Glutamine
- Selenium
- N-acetyl cysteine (NAC)
- S-adenosyl-L-methionine (SAMe)
- Vitamins C and E
- Zinc

\* Not recommended while undergoing interferon-based therapy

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# Chinese Medicine

## Philosophy of Balance (Yin & Yang)

- health – present when there is balance within the body and with nature
- disease – result of deviation from balance
- treatment – aimed at restoring balance

# Chinese Medicine

- treatment is holistic and individualized
- herbology
- acupuncture and moxibustion
- therapeutic massage – tui na
- meditative exercise – qi gong

# Chinese Medicine

## Treatment Uses for Chronic HCV

- Suppress HCV replication to lower viral load.
- Control inflammation and restore liver function.
- Regulate immunity.
- Improve microcirculation and decrease fibrosis.
- Facilitate bile secretion and excretion.
- Lower portal vein pressure.
- Treat HCV-related symptoms and complications.

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# Integrative Medicine

- Integrative medicine is healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person (body, mind, and spirit), including all aspects of lifestyle.
- It emphasizes the therapeutic relationship and makes use of all appropriate therapies, both conventional and alternative.

# Integrative Medicine

- As it is currently practiced in the United States, integrative medicine is spearheaded by western doctors who appreciate the benefits and limitations of both western medicine and alternative healing practices.
- An integrative medicine doctor practices western medicine and also utilizes other healing techniques either in combination with or as an alternative to conventional healing practices.

# Integrative Medicine

Integrative medicine practitioners utilize a wide variety of healing techniques in addition to conventional treatments. Examples include:

- acupuncture
- herbal medicine
- nutrition
- exercise
- homeopathy
- energy medicine
- vitamins and nutritional supplements

# Integrative Medicine

## Healing techniques that may be used to treat HCV

- interferon-based therapy
- meditation
- botanicals and supplements
- clinical hypnosis
- acupuncture
- nutritional counseling
- others

# Integrative Medicine

## Important questions posed with Integrative treatment

- When is pharmaceutical treatment necessary versus elective?
- When is complementary and/or alternative treatment appropriate?
- When can both be combined for more effective treatment?

# Necessary Caution for Liver Health

- “First, do no harm”
  - Avoid hepatotoxins
    - Over the counter medications (alcohol, pain relievers, etc)
    - Avoid iron supplements
    - Certain prescription medicine
    - Hepatotoxic herbs
    - Hepatotoxic contaminants in botanicals, formulas, and supplements
  - Avoid too much of a “good” thing (more is not always better)

# Necessary Caution for Liver Health

- Take a critical eye toward products marketed to people with hepatitis C.



# If it seems too good to be true...

- The FDA cannot always protect you
- Err on the side of safety
- Research ingredients, if possible
- Discuss it with your healthcare team

