

TYPES OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

SELECTED THERAPIES	DESCRIPTION
Alternative medical systems	
Ayurveda	The traditional medical system of India, originating > 4000 yr ago, uses herbs, massage, yoga, and therapeutic elimination to restore balance within the body and with nature. It is based on balancing the 3 bodily qualities (doshas): vata, pitta, and kapha
Homeopathy	Developed in Germany during the late 1700s, homeopathy is a system of medicine based on the law of similars: A substance that, when given in large doses, causes a set of symptoms can purportedly cure the same symptoms when it is given in minute doses
Naturopathy	Founded on the healing power of nature, this system uses a combination of therapies, including acupuncture, counseling, exercise therapy, herbal medicine, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, natural childbirth, nutrition, physical medicine, and stress management
Traditional Chinese medicine	Originating in China > 2000 yr ago, this system uses acupuncture, herbs, massage, and meditative exercise (qi gong) to restore balance within the body and with nature. It is based on the 8 principles of yin and yang, which manifest in the body as hot and cold, internal and external, and deficiency and excess
Mind-body techniques	
Biofeedback	Mechanical devices are used to provide information about physiologic signals (eg, BP, muscle activity) and to teach patients methods of regulating these processes through intention
Guided imagery	Mental images are used to promote relaxation or wellness or to promote healing of a particular condition (eg, cancer, psychologic trauma). The images can involve any of the senses and may be self-directed or guided by the practitioner
Hypnotherapy	Patients are put into a state of attentive and focused concentration. They become absorbed in the images presented by the hypnotherapist and can be relatively unaware, but not entirely unconscious, of their surroundings; they tend not to register experiences as a part of their conscious awareness
Meditation	Mediation is intentional self-regulation of attention or a systematic mental focus on particular aspects of inner or outer experience. Most meditation practices were developed in a religious or spiritual context; their ultimate goal was some type of spiritual growth, personal transformation, or transcendental experience. However, some practitioners suggest that as a health care intervention, meditation may be effective regardless of a person's cultural or religious background
Relaxation techniques	These techniques are specifically designed to elicit a psychophysiologic state of hypoaarousal. They may be aimed at reducing sympathetic nervous system activity and BP, easing muscle tension, slowing metabolic processes, or altering brain wave activity
Biologically based treatments	
Diet therapies	Specialized dietary regimens (eg, Gerson therapy, Kelley regimen, macrobiotic diet, Ornish diet, Pritikin diet) are used to treat or prevent a specific disease (eg, cancer, cardiovascular disorders) or to generally promote health

**TYPES OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE
 MEDICINE—Continued**

SELECTED THERAPIES	DESCRIPTION
Biologic therapies	Substances (eg, shark cartilage) or molecules (eg, <i>S</i> -adenylosyl-L-methionine [SAME], glucosamine) naturally occurring in animals are used to treat disease
Herbalism	Plants are used to treat disease and promote health
Orthomolecular therapies	Molecules normally found in the body (eg, hormones, vitamins, nutrients) are used to treat disease and promote health
Manipulative and body-based methods	
Chiropractic	Chiropractic is based on the relationship between structure of the spine and function of the nervous system; bones and joints are manipulated to restore balance to the body
Massage	Tissues are manipulated to promote wellness and to reduce pain and stress
Postural reeducation	Movement and touch are used to help patients relearn healthy posture. Techniques include Alexander, Feldenkrais, and Trager. Therapies seek to release habitual, harmful ways of holding the body by focusing on awareness through movement
Reflexology	Manual pressure is applied to specific areas of the foot that theoretically correspond to different organs or systems of the body
Rolfing	The fascia are manipulated and stretched to reestablish healthy bone and muscle alignment
Energy therapies	
External qi gong	In this subset of Chinese medical qi gong practice, master healers use the energy of their own biofield to bring the patient's energy into balance
Magnets	Magnets are placed on the body to reduce pain
Pulsed electrical field	Injured body parts are placed in an induced electrical field to facilitate healing
Reiki	In this technique of Japanese origin, practitioners channel energy through their body and into a patient's body to promote healing
Therapeutic touch	This technique is often referred to as laying on of hands, even though actual touch is not required; it uses the therapist's healing energy to identify and repair imbalances in a patient's biofield