

Background Information

Complementary and Alternative Therapies with Information on How to Evaluate for AIDS Health Fraud

In general the philosophy behind complementary and alternative therapies (CAT) is to treat the body as a whole, and that the body and mind are inseparable and capable of self-repair. These may include herbs, massage, aromatherapy, etc.

It is important to have as much information as possible about these types of treatments before attempting to use them. It is vital that your primary care provider be aware and have the opportunity to discuss any other treatments that you are thinking about using.

Consider the source. For example, one in ten Internet sites dealing with gastrointestinal problems have been found to be “unproven or outright quackery.” Commercial sites selling products or therapies were found less reliable than sites run by the government, universities or medical centers. Today due to popular demand, more and more medical centers and health care payers have begun to offer some “alternative therapies.” This means that both patients and providers will learn more about what “alternative” treatments can and cannot do.

AIDS Health Fraud

AIDS health fraud is any false, misleading or unproven claim about the cure, treatment or prevention of HIV/AIDS.

AIDS fraud can be dangerous. Fraudulent products are not properly tested and may harm you, and they could even kill you. Fraudulent products waste your money, and health insurance usually doesn't pay for them.

If you use products or treatments that don't work, you may delay getting proper care and your illness may get worse. There are legitimate treatments that extend and improve the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Many people with HIV/AIDS look for additions or alternatives to conventional medical treatment for their disease. Some of these treatments may help people with HIV, while others have no effects, or they are harmful. You need to be careful and go over any alternative treatments with your health care provider, pharmacist, or Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist to see if it is right for you. BE AWARE!

Background Information

Ask questions:

1. Safety: Is the product or treatment harmful?
2. Are there harmful drug-drug interactions with prescriptive and over-the-counter medications and/or nutrients?
3. Are unproven treatments being used, while delaying effective conventional treatment(s) and possibly missing important windows of opportunity?
4. Does the therapy work?
5. Is the financial expense worth the benefit?

Pay attention and be wary when you come across these “warning flags” promoting a product or service:

1. It is THE cure or gives “miraculous” results.
2. You are told not to use any other treatment.
3. The physician (or researcher) is the ONLY one with the answer.
4. It costs a lot.
5. Testimonials are the main source of information about the therapy.
6. The FDA or the AMA is persecuting the treatment or the practitioner.
7. The ingredients are a secret.

MedWatch

Report any adverse effects of medical foods, dietary supplements, infant formulas, and drugs to your doctor and to MedWatch, the FDA Medical Products Reporting Program. MedWatch reporting forms can be obtained and reports can be made by phone: 1-800-FDA-1088 or via the Internet: www.fda.gov/medwatch. You will be asked to provide:

1. Name, address and telephone number of the person who became ill.
2. Name and address of the doctor or hospital providing medical treatment.
3. Description of the problem.
4. Name of the product and store where it was bought.

Background Information

Registered Dietitians

Registered dietitians (RDs) are health care professionals who have completed academic and experience requirements established by the Commission on Dietetic Registration, the credentialing agency for the American Dietetic Association (ADA). This includes a minimum of a bachelor's degree granted by a U.S. regionally accredited college/university, or equivalent, and an accredited preprofessional experience program. RDs demonstrate their knowledge of food and nutrition by successfully passing a national credentialing exam and by completing ongoing continuing professional development. Find a Registered Dietitian at www.eatright.org.

The HIV/AIDS Dietetic Practice Group (DPG) was established to enable members of the American Dietetic Association across the country to network and share information, collaborate, and advocate having a positive impact on people affected by HIV/AIDS. <http://www.hivaidsdpg.org/>

HIV knowledgeable registered dietitians work with and are referred by primary care practitioners to provide early and ongoing medical nutrition therapy. Goals and benefits of medical nutrition therapy in HIV care include: to optimize adequate intake of nutrients, preserve weight and lean body mass, minimize side effects, coordinate foods, meal and medication schedules to optimize drug levels and reduce risk of drug resistance, and evaluate complementary therapies.

Registered dietitians are licensed or certified by the majority of states. Reimbursement varies by state and health insurance plan. Diabetes self-management and training is now under Medicare Part B.

For more information:

The American Dietetic Association
216 W Jackson Blvd
Chicago, IL 60606-6995
1-800-877-1600

Background Information

Complementary and Alternative Therapies

Acupressure

Acupressure is thought to be one of the oldest healing methods in the world. Fingertip pressure is put on certain points on the body to help balance the flow of energy. This flow of energy creates a healthy function of the internal organs and helps prevent or cure disease. Acupressure is used to relieve headaches, back pain, and other ailments. Acupressurists may be licensed, registered or certified depending on the State. Insurance coverage may be available.

For more information:

American Massage Therapy Association
820 Davis St. Suite 100
Evanston, IL60201
(847) 864-0123

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a way of adjusting the body's "life energy" (chi) flow. It uses small needles that are inserted into the skin in carefully chosen points in the body. Treatments may include the use of herbs or other supplements as well. Acupuncture can be used to relieve symptoms as well as to promote general health and well being. Acupuncturists are licensed in some States. They can be medical doctors or other health care professionals. At this time twenty-two States license, certify or register acupuncturists, and many insurance companies are now offer acupuncture as part of covered services.

For more information:

American Academy of Medical Acupuncture Patient Referral Line
5820 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(800) 521-2262

Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a wholistic system of medicine originating in India thousands of years ago. It provides guidance about food and lifestyle so that healthy people can stay healthy and folks

Background Information

with health challenges can improve their health. Ayurvedic medicine is validated by observation, inquiry, direct examination and knowledge derived from the ancient texts.

The underlying principle is identification and treatment of a person's make-up. The body is made up of tissues (dhatus), waste products (malas), and doshas (loosely translated to Energetic Forces). The energetic forces that influence nature and human beings are called Trishodas. The Tridoshas influence all movements, all transformations, all sensory functions, and many of the other activities in the human body and mind, and are made up of varying amounts of three doshas: vata, pitta, kapha. Each dosha consists of the basic elements, earth, air, fire, water and space. Methods of practice and treatments include Yoga, vigorous exercise, stretching, breathing exercises, meditation, massage, herbal treatments and the use of cleansing and detoxification. Methods are generally non-invasive and non-toxic and rely on the person's willingness to take part in a healthier way of life.

Ayurvedic medicine is not appropriate for treating serious injuries. Ayurvedic practitioners are not licensed to practice in the United States.

For more information:

Ayurvedic Institute
11311 Menaul NE, Suite A
Albuquerque, NM 87112
(505) 291-9698

Chiropractic

Chiropractors represent the second largest group of primary care providers in the United States after physicians. There are fourteen colleges in the US accredited by the Council on Chiropractic.

Key Principles:

- ❖ The human organism can keep itself healthy if there are no barriers to full expression of all its vital functions.
- ❖ The body has the ability to heal itself from within.
- ❖ The life force of the person flows throughout the body through the nervous system.
- ❖ By manipulating the spine and other joints which the nervous system flow through, the chiropractor can remove barriers to let the full energy of this life force to be released.

Background Information

Chiropractors do not directly treat disease but rather help the body to restore itself. Many insurance companies now cover the cost of chiropractic care. Some managed health care plans include chiropractic care. Chiropractors are licensed in every state. They must pass an examination with the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners.

For more information:

World Chiropractic Alliance
2950 N. Dobson Rd. Suite 1
Chadler, AZ 85224
(800) 347-1011

Homeopathy

Homeopathy aims to help the body heal itself. It uses the philosophy that “a substance that causes symptoms of illness in a well person can also be used to cure similar symptoms when they result from illness”. Homeopathy uses remedies to “provoke” or challenge” the person’s vital force so that it will bring all the body’s systems to a higher level of order. There is no national standard or certification to determine if a homeopath is competent. Insurance coverage varies among the States.

For more information:

The National Center for Homeopathy
810 N. Fairfax St. #306
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 548-7790

Naturopathy

Naturopaths are trained in a four year accredited program. They are trained with the focus on preventive medicine and natural therapies. They are licensed in only 13 States and insurance coverage varies by State and individual insurance policy.

Philosophy of naturopathy: The body has the power to heal itself, so treatment should not be given to alleviate symptoms but to support the self-healing mechanisms, the “vital force”. The symptoms of disease are not part of the disease itself but a sign that the body is trying to get rid of toxins and return to a natural state of balance. In addition to being as natural and gentle as possible, all treatments should take into account the mental, emotional, and social aspects of a person as well as the physical.

Background Information

For more information:

American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP)
2366 Eastlake Ave., Suite 322
Seattle, WA 98102

Traditional Chinese Medicine

The philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine is prevention of disease, and the view that the body is a reflection of the natural world. Chi (qi) or “life force energy” is the force that makes life happen and gives the body the ability to be active. Wellness is a function of a balanced flow of chi and illness or disease is the result of changes in the flow of chi. Wellness also needs the balance of yin and yang, that is, the dual nature of all things. Some Chinese medicine health care providers are also licensed medical doctors, and some are acupuncturists. Insurance companies differ in their coverage, according to State regulations, licensing and whether medical supervision is needed.

Traditional Chinese medicine include the following methods of practice:

- ❖ Acupuncture
- ❖ Chinese Herbs
- ❖ Chi King (meditation, relaxation training, movement, postures and breathing, etc.)
- ❖ Massage
- ❖ Traditional Chinese Medicine nutrition practices include food as diet, tonic or medicine, and food avoidance

For more information:

National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance
14637 Starr Road Southeast
Olalla, Washington, 98359
phone: 253-851-6896
fax: 253-851-6883
<http://www.acuall.org/>

Background Information

Nutritional Supplements

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are micronutrients, that is, nutrients needed in relatively small amounts compared to carbohydrates, protein, fats and water. Ongoing research in HIV continues to indicate that there is an increased need for certain nutrients, as well as inadequate intake, malabsorption, metabolic changes and changes in organ system function to affect bioavailability of specific nutrients. Problems with over supplementation of a vitamin or mineral also continue to be reported.

Until there is wide spread agreement for supplementation beyond that of a basic multiple vitamin-mineral supplement and a low dosage B-complex, work with your doctor and dietitian to identify need for additional single nutrients.

Examples of multiple vitamin-mineral supplements are:

- ❖ AARP Alphabet II Multiplevitamins and Minerals Formula 643*
- ❖ AARP Formula 683, Women's Formula*
- ❖ Centrum Advanced Formula
- ❖ Centrum Silver*
- ❖ Nature Made Century-Vite
- ❖ Nature Made Essential Balance
- ❖ One A Day Men*,
- ❖ Theragram M

The Daily Values (DVs) listed on labels of most food products and supplements can be used as a basic guide. DVs are made up of two sets of references, Daily Reference Values (DRV) and Reference Daily Intakes (RDIs). RDIs have replaced the term USRDA and represents the estimated values for vitamins and minerals for individuals over 4 years of age.

The DVs are expected to change eventually to reflect revised Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) needed as determined by the National Academy of Science. Currently, instead of publishing one report, they are producing 7 reports over a few years.

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) is similar but different term. RDAs are

Background Information

nutrients needed for almost all healthy individuals in specific age and gender groups. In the past it was to prevent deficiency, and now it is the recommended amount of nutrients to decrease the risk of chronic disease.

Tolerable Upper Intake Levels (ULs) for the first time have been set. ULs are the maximum intake by an individual that is unlikely to pose risk of adverse health effects in almost all healthy individuals and in a specified group. These are not to be seen as a recommendation of intake

Antioxidants are vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene and the mineral selenium. HIV infection is believed to increase oxidative stress, which antioxidants may help. Recently it was reported that decreasing viral load decreases oxidative stress.

Background Information

Other Dietary Supplements

Besides vitamins and minerals, dietary supplements include amino acids, fiber, herbal products and other substances. Herbal products usually contain a very small amount of vitamins and minerals. These products usually contain a very small amount of vitamins and minerals. The value of products for general health is currently under study and standards for their purity, potency and composition are being developed.

Making choices may be confusing. Health claims may appear promising, yet lack scientific evidence. FDA protects the public from harmful or misleading ingredients, but it does not approve food or dietary supplements.

Use Caution!

Many dietary supplements may act like drugs, interact with drugs and nutrients, may have side effects, and other concerns. They may contain more or less than the ingredients listed, they may contain harmful contaminants intentionally or not.

The popular herb, St. John's Wort, commonly used for mild depression, was found to greatly reduce the drug levels of the protease inhibitor indinavir (Crixivan) and numerous other drugs. This is an example of how little is known about dietary supplements and how the prescribing physician, pharmacist and dietitian should be informed of all dietary supplements and medications being taken.

The chart shows some popular dietary supplements, some harmful and some promising. Each must be evaluated with your doctor prior to use.

*Remember to report adverse events to your doctor and to MedWatch either directly or through your doctor. For more information see **References** (Section 10).*

Background Information

Nutrient	Function	Per Day			Tolerable Upper Intake Level
		Reference Daily Intake (RDI) or Dietary Value DV)	Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)		
Vitamin A	Necessary for normal vision and for healthy cell structure. Helps keep sin healthy and protects against infection in the linings of the mouth, nose, throat, lungs, and digestive and urinary tracts.	5,000 IU	10,000 IU /Men 8,000 IU /Women	Not recommended	
Beta-Carotene	Converted in the body to vitamin A as needed and prevent vitamin A deficiency. No other functions have yet been identified. Found to function as an antioxidant in lab tests, but not consistently in humans. Reports on adverse effects of over-consumption have been contradictory	Not established	Not established	Not advisable other than for the prevention and control of vitamin A deficiency.	
Thiamin (B 1)	Helps in the breakdown and utilization of carbohydrates. Important for healthy nerves and muscles and for normal heart function. A mild deficiency may cause loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, and disturbed sleep. A deficiency may also cause night blindness, dry rough skin, loss of appetite and diarrhea.	1.5 mg	1.5 mg /Men 1.1 mg /Women	Up to 50 mg	
Riboflavin (B2)	Helps in the break down of and utilization of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. Needed for the utilization of other B-complex vitamins. A deficiency may cause a reduction in antibody production after immunization. A prolonged deficiency may lead to chapped lips, cracks and sores in the corners of the mouth, a sore tongue, and sensitivity to light.	1.7 mg	1.7 mg /Men 1.3 mg /Women	Up to 50 mg	
Niacin (B3)	Helps maintain the function of the skin, nerves, and gastrointestinal tract. Also aids in the release of energy from foods.	20 mg	19 mg /Men 15 mg /Women	Up to 50 mg	

Background Information

Nutrient	Function	Per Day		
		Reference Daily Intake (RDI) or Dietary Value (DV)	Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)	Tolerable Upper Intake Level
Pyroxidine (B6)	Plays an important role in maintaining the normal function of the immune system. Can help prevent anemia, skin lesions, and nerve damage. Deficiencies may result in a decrease in white blood cell count and antibody production, possibly reducing resistance to cancer and other diseases.	2.0 mg	2.0 mg /Men 1.6 mg /Women	Up to 50 mg
Vitamin B 12	Essential for the manufacture of genetic material in the cells and therefore, growth and development. Plays a role in the formation of red blood cells and helps prevent pernicious anemia. Helps in the utilization of folic acid and carbohydrates, and helps maintain a healthy nervous system. A deficiency may cause a reduction in white blood cell function and impair the immune response, which can increase susceptibility to infection. A deficiency may also cause anemia, sore mouth and tongue, numbness and tingling of the limbs, memory loss, and depression.	6 mcg	2.0 mcg /Men 2.0 mcg /Women	Up to 100 mcg
Folate	Essential for growth and reproduction, and for the utilization of protein. Important in the formation of red blood cells, and the development and proper function of the nervous system. A deficiency may cause a reduction in white blood cell count, which can increase susceptibility to infection. A deficiency may also cause anemia.	0.4 mg (400 mcg)	400 mcg /Men 400 mcg /Women 600 mcg pregnancy or over 70 y female 500 mcg breast feeding	Up to 400 mcg
Pantothenic Acid	Essential for the conversion of sugars and fats into energy, and for the body's use of other vitamins.	10 mg	additional 100 No RDA (ESA = 4-7 mg)	Up to 50 mg

Background Information

Nutrient	Function	Per Day		
		Reference Daily Intake (RDI) or Dietary Value (D)	Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)	Tolerable Upper Intake Level
Vitamin C	<p>Needed for the proper function of the nervous system and adrenal glands, and for normal growth and development. A deficiency may cause a decrease in antibody production.</p> <p>Essential for healthy cell structure. Helps maintain normal connective tissue, promotes healthy teeth and gums, aids in iron absorption, and is needed for proper wound healing. A deficiency can cause a decrease in general resistance and antibody response, which can increase susceptibility to infection. A deficiency can also lead to anemia and the destruction of red blood cells.</p>	60 mg	75 mg Women 90 mg Men Smokers: Add 35 mg	2,000 mg/day based on the adverse effect of osmotic diarrhea and other gastrointestinal disturbances.
Vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol)	<p>Helps in the formation of red blood cells and in the utilization of vitamin K. A deficiency can cause a decrease in general resistance and antibody response, which can increase susceptibility to infection. A deficiency can also lead to anemia and the destruction of red blood cells.</p>	30 IU	15 mg Women 15 mg Men 15 mg = 22 IU natural alpha-tocopherol, or 33 IU synthetic form.	1,000 mg/day of any natural form of alpha-tocopherol (equal to 1,500 IU alpha-tocopherol or 1,100 IU of synthetic vitamin E, dl-alpha-tocopherol). Higher amounts increase risk for bleeding. Vitamin E can interfere with blood coagulation.
Selenium	<p>Needed for proper immune response. It also improves the supply of oxygen to the heart muscle, thereby increasing endurance. A deficiency may cause impaired antibody production and may impair the killing of bacteria, which can lead to increased susceptibility to infection.</p>	Not established	55 mcg Women 55 mcg Men	400 mcg/day based on the adverse effect of selenosis; could cause brittleness and loss of hair and nails. Also could cause GI disturbances, skin rash, fatigue, irritability, and nervous system abnormalities.

Background Information

Nutrient	Function	Per Day		
		Reference Daily Intake (RDI) or Daily Value	Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)	Tolerable Upper Intake Level
Zinc	Important for wound and burn healing, and needed for the formation of proteins and nucleic acids. Helps the body use carbohydrates. A deficiency may cause a loss of appetite and affect the sense of taste. A severe deficiency may result in hair loss, rash, and inflammation of the mouth, tongue, eyelids, and areas around the fingernails.	15 mg	15 mg /Men 12 mg /Women	15 mg /men 12 mg /Women
Calcium	Important for bone and tooth structure, blood clotting, nerve conduction, muscular and heart contraction, and cell walls. Also important for facilitating vitamin B12 absorption and neurotransmitter release. Deficiency may result in osteoporosis, loss of height, premature tooth loss, bone pain or fracture. Deficiency may also result in muscle cramping.	1 g (1000 mg)	For those at risk for osteoporosis: 1000-1300 mg	2.5 g (2500 mg)

Adapted from:

1. McMillan, Lisa, Jill Jarvie, and Janet Brauer. Positive Cooking: Cooking for People Living with HIV. Avery, 1997. Used with Permission.
2. Kurzweil, Paula. "Daily Values' Encourage Healthy Diet." FDA Consumer Special Issue. May 1993.
3. CFSAN, FDA. Food Labeling and Nutrition. Last updated January 7, 2000. <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html>.