



## Complementary and Alternative Medicines and Therapies

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In addition to medications and other medical care from doctors, a large and growing number of people turn to other healing practices to try to improve their health. These diverse therapies -- used either with conventional medicine (complementary) or instead of conventional medicine (alternative) -- include homeopathy, chiropractic, traditional Chinese medicine (such as acupuncture and Tai Chi), Ayurveda, naturopathy, massage therapy, meditation, biofeedback, herbs or other supplements, and more.

There is some evidence that acupuncture can provide relief from arthritis pain, and that meditation and biofeedback techniques can offer relief from stress and help with pain management. Most alternative and complementary practices, however, have not been through the scientific testing and clinical research that all conventional medicines undergo, so it is difficult to know their effectiveness in treating lupus.

It is known, though, that some herbal supplements can make a person's lupus symptoms worse, or interact in a harmful way with the medicines a doctor has prescribed. Therefore it is very important for people with lupus who use complementary or alternative medicine (especially herbs or supplements) to discuss these practices with their doctors. Lupus is a complex disease and no one with lupus should rely on complementary or alternative practices instead of the medication they have been prescribed.

### Related Information

[Complementary & Alternative Treatments for Lupus](#)

Spring 2005 issue of Lupus Now magazine

[The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#)

[The Mayo Clinic Alternative Medicine Center](#)

[Medication Management and Lupus](#)

May 2008 webchat transcript with Dr. Joan T. Merrill

[What Is New for Lupus Research and Treatment](#)

December 2006 webchat transcript with Dr. Joan T. Merrill

### Frequently Asked Question

#### **Does the LFA have any recommendations regarding alternative and unproven treatments that are often advertised?**

The LFA is frequently asked about alternative therapies for the treatment of lupus. Although we remain hopeful that newer more effective therapies will be developed, we must be cautious regarding products that have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

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<http://www.lupus.org/>