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Alternative Medicine – What Is It All About?

Alternative Medicine & Today's Society

Do you know what alternative medicine is? If you think that you do not, you are wrong. Alternative medicine has become something of a niche in today's world. The healing treatments that used to be thought of as ineffective to certain people of the world, are now being used more and more frequently. Many well known types of alternative medicine include:

- Massage
- Aromatherapy
- Acupuncture
- Herbal Medicine
- Herbal Tea
- Hydrotherapy
- Meditation
- Spiritual Healing

Any of these forms of treatment sound familiar to you? I'm sure that at least one of them is not only something you have heard of but also a form of treatment that you yourself have attempted at least once before.

There seems to be more than ever, people with ailments and sicknesses that the doctors can not seem to cure. So people are now turning to the alternative medications that once worked for people thousands of years ago.

There is also a large number of very health conscious people in our society today. These are the type of people who do not like to fill their bodies with prescription drugs. So to avoid this, herbal medications have become their substitutes. Herbal medications are meant to do the same thing as prescription medications, but they are better for you. Completely organic.

Another fact regarding alternative medicine in today's society, is that it is simply "the thing to do". It has turned into one of those fads that takes over a society. Some of these treatments are being misused. There may be absolutely nothing wrong with a person and they are using these alternative treatments as a reward instead of what they really are. Massage is one of the top treatments that can be misused. This is one treatment that has integrated itself into the daily routines of so many people in today's society. Massage is now something that can be used not only to relieve pains but also to relieve stress. It is a very relaxing treatment that many people have taken the time to put into their daily routines as an outlet from their everyday lives.

Meditation is also a spiritual and ancient treatment that is being used more and more throughout the years. Meditation is similar to the art of massage. They are both used for their relief of stress and tension. Meditation however, is not something that you can do

without learning anything about it. This is something you do on your own, you are in complete control. Perhaps this is one reason why so many people have taken a liking to this treatment. If you have never tried or learned anything about meditation before, it is something that comes highly recommended by many people in today's society.

Today's society is in need of a change. Alternative medicine is that change. The change and the great difference that alternative medicine brings to the lives of people who use them is something that many people have been searching for. Stress has become a very pertinent factor in the average person's life. These alternative forms of treatment and medicine relieve this stress and tension that people bring on themselves.

Today's society is full of stress and tension and illness. Without these alternative treatments, the stress would be harder to relieve for those who do not know how to monitor the stress in their lives. Massage and meditation are the two most common of the alternative medicines and they are effecting the society of today in an extremely positive way. In time, you will begin to see more and more of the other alternative medicines in the society of today as well as the future.

What is Alternative Medicine?

Did it ever happen to you that you had a terrible headache and the best medicine you could think of was for someone wear boxing gloves to a big bang on your head, or you just feel like pulling your hair out? If yes, you have already thought of some alternative medicine!

No, alternative medicine isn't about hurting yourself, but it definitely is about exploring some other methods of medicine other than swallowing the tablets. The reason for this is partly because of avoiding dependence to allopathic drugs, which can indirectly do more harm than good and partly because of man's continuous curiosity to try something new. However, there's no harm looking for new things if you can find something better to deal with your day-to-day health problems.

Much of the "alternative medicine" or "alternative healing" comes from the ancient medical wisdom. Some cultures use sharp needles to cure pain from body, some believe that herbs and shrubs can provide great relief, while some people will use a paste of mud on their body to cool down, or use an ice pack, hot water bottle, or simple massaging – all these methods surely are a form of medicine as it relieves pain and other ailments. However, these methods aren't well known to the public as they are against the organized advertisement movements of traditional pharmaceutical products and hence fall under the category of alternative medicine.

Defining Alternative Medicine

It's difficult to establish a single definition for alternative medicine. These days there are so many techniques and methods being explored and marketed that there are many names floating out there.

Be it Holistic medicine, natural medicine, complementary medicine, integrated medicine...they are all but aspects of alternative medicine. The common alternative therapies include aromatherapy, acupuncture, yoga, massage, music therapy, hypnosis, relaxation, meditation, ayurveda, naturopathy, nutritional therapy, and homeopathy as well. This point of alternative medicine is to see that all parts of an individual's life are in sync and healthy.

Alternative Medicine System's Point Of View

Alternative medicine systems say that health isn't mere absence of disease. Life ought to be lived with enthusiasm, and absence of enthusiasm too is a sign of ill health. Every individual is different and has a unique purpose in life. Alternative medicine tries to ensure that this purpose of life is maintained, as a person without a purpose in life cannot function to the fullest of his abilities. One needs to be inspired and motivated to be able to live life fully.

An illness, in fact, might not be a cause of great worry. It isn't just infections which cause sickness. A new thought process in one's mind is capable of changing the entire personality. The great warrior king Asoka was so moved by the death and destruction in the kalinga war that he gave up everything and became a Buddhist reformer. Similarly, illness may present itself as an opportunity to change us into different, better human beings. Therefore alternative medicine tries to have an integral view of the person's personality and various factors and emotions guiding his behaviour.

So next time, when you feel unwell, resist the temptation to swallow that pill, just sit back, relax and switch on your favourite music, go back in time, evoke sweet memories, analyse your path, redefine your goals, have a purpose to live for and you will feel your strength returning and realize that life is indeed beautiful – and worth living for!

The History of Alternative Medicine

Alternative or holistic medicine was the beginning of the idea of medicine thousands of years ago. In these times, people would take into consideration many different factors before initiating a cure. They would consider not only the physical state, but the emotional and intellectual state as well. This form of medicine concerned itself not only with the physical problem, but with the problems of the "whole" self. This is what makes this form of medicine so much different from today.

The medicine that we use today is in high demand and in demand to fix whatever the problem is instantly. For the most part, the doctors that we see for our symptoms only look at the physical problems of the body and nothing else. This is only one of the many differences between the old medicine and today.

Alternative medicine has evolved from the beginning and has survived through the ages of pills and pain removers. There are millions of people today who still live their life by the alternative medical treatments. Alternative medicine includes massage, therapy, herbal tea, herbal medicine and more. Massage is one of the oldest and first styles of alternative medicine known today. There has been record of massage since ancient Egypt and the pyramids. Massage is something that many people take advantage of today, but many do not realize that they are using alternative medicine because massage has become so common.

Each and every culture and civilization had their own version of alternative medicine. With more than 5000 years of alternative medicine, there were many different treatments that were used. It was from some of these alternative medical treatments that we have our faster and more effective treatments today.

In European history there were two types of healers, the professional physicians and the folk healers. The folk healers lived in the lower class and healed the people of each village who could not afford the expensive physicians. These people believed in the folk treatment and it worked for them. This type of situation also occurred in many other cultures.

In the Western culture, philosophy was frequently used to assist the folk healers in their quest for a holistic treatment. Philosophy was something that told the stories of their lives. With a twist of philosophy and religion as well as belief, they easily found the best treatment available for whatever it was that was ailing the villagers of this time.

It did not take long for the folk healers and alternative medicine world to evolve into a new form of medicine: - the conventional ways that we know today. Each new century there was a new development in the world of medicine. These advances are what has brought us to where we are today in the medical world.

Just because we now have a more advanced or shall we say instantaneous form of medication, this does not mean that alternative medicine does not exist any longer. Alternative medicine is still surviving and still used by many people today. Massage, aromatherapy, acupuncture, herbal, humor therapy, meditation, and the list can go on and on. The only thing is, that some of these treatments have recently over the years become to popular that they are no longer considered alternative medicine and they are now supported by physicians.

The history of alternative medicine is as progressive and distinctive as any other historical adventure. Alternative medicine has survived through the years for one reason. It works. The theory of alternative medicine has been ridiculed throughout the centuries but the fact remains that these treatments work. They may not work as fast as the treatments that we have today, but they work. Holistically and naturally these

treatments work. This type of treatment can be better for most people if they give these ideas a chance.

Conventional Treatments vs. Alternative Treatments

There are not as many differences between these two types of treatments as you may think. There are however, quite a few large differences that may change your mind regarding whichever form of treatment you normally use.

Conventional methods of treatments are treatments that everyone has used at one point in their life. These conventional methods include treatments such as, prescription medication, scientific methods, x-rays and the list goes on. Everyone is familiar with these types of treatments and at one point or another has undergone one or more of them. Conventional treatment seems to have taken over the medical establishment. Some patients feel more at ease knowing they are taking pills and doing what their doctor tells them, some people do not need this. These are the people who prefer to use alternative methods of treatments.

Have you ever tried any alternative methods of treatments? Alternative treatments require a judgment call. It takes a big step for some people to move away from the conventional medical treatments and try something new. Sometimes a change in treatment is all you need to feel that much better. Alternative treatments include:

- Acupuncture
- Aromatherapy
- Massage
- Meditation
- Homeopathy
- Herbs

These forms of treatment have become more and more popular in the last few years. The use of alternative medicine and treatments are beginning to be used more and more when the conventional methods are found to be ineffective. There are many diseases, chronic pains and illnesses that are found to be incurable and even sometimes untreatable. This is when patients find themselves searching for alternative treatments to ease their pain.

No matter what your pain is, anyone of the alternative treatments listed above can help. These methods are meant to not only ease your physical pain, but to also relieve your mental and spiritual stresses and tensions. It may be hard to believe but stress and tension can create and increase the pains of your disease. These alternative methods relieve this stress, therefore relieving your pain. It is hard for some people to make this jump to alternative treatments, but in the past few years, alternative treatments has become not so far of a jump.

As you can see there is really only one single difference between these two forms of treatments. Conventional methods of treatments only focus on the physical ailments and nothing else. Whereas the alternative methods of treatment focus on the entire body and soul.

Alternative methods do require a bit more work than the conventional methods. They require a lot of self discipline. If you are not willing to put the effort in, then it is doubtful that you will see any results from these methods. Conventional methods take absolutely no work from you as the patient except going to your doctor and taking the medicine they prescribe for you. It is based on trust not belief.

For serious, even life threatening diseases or illnesses you may want to consider using both of these methods simultaneously. When deciding whether this is right for you, it is very important to check with your doctor before undergoing any alternative treatments. You want to avoid any negative interference. If used properly, you can live an enjoyable life without stress and pain as well as controlling your illness with your conventional methods.

There are some great differences between these two forms of treatment, but if used correctly, they can compliment each other in a very positive way. Depending on why you want to use the alternative methods and what your pains or ailments are you can choose the right alternative method to compliment your illness in the best way possible. Sometimes different can be good!

Alternative Treatment Sessions

Going to the doctor's office is not something anyone enjoys. You have the hours of waiting in the waiting room before you get to see the doctor and then you have the additional wait in their office, still waiting to be treated. This visit can be a long, tense and frustrating event for most people. Alternative practitioners believe that it is this stress and frustration that not only adds to the pain but may in fact have a part in creating it.

When you take that first step to make an appointment with a practitioner you have already taken a risk in your mind. Varying from what is conventional can sometimes be very hard for people. Choosing the right practitioner also has a large part in the process. The experience of your first visit is what will make you want to go back or change your mind about alternative treatments altogether. The entire environment surrounding alternative treatments is different from the more well known doctor's office experience. You will find yourself in a calm and relaxing environment. The experience is enjoyable, stress relieving and something that you would want to do again.

In a doctor's office session, you find that the focus is only on your pain or illness. Your physical condition is the only concern of your doctor and nothing else. You sit in a quiet

room as the doctor or physician writes down their opinions and thoughts regarding your condition. In most cases, you feel a little anxious and nervous. It is an environment that creates stress and tension. This is not a good environment for someone who is already ill in whatever way.

If you get up the courage to attempt a session with any type of alternative treatment, then you are in for a completely different type of session. You will find yourself pleasantly relaxed and little excited for your new experience. Practitioners try to make your first experience and every other experience after that the most enjoyable and relaxing as they possibly can. When you are in the session, you must decide right away what you think about your practitioner's personality. Most of the time you will love them!

These type of people are very relaxed and free. You will notice right away the difference. The practitioner will talk to you about your life, find out more about your personality and learn about you. There is no specific focus on just one area, the focus is on you as a whole. This is the biggest difference between the two types of sessions.

Deciding which session is best for you is a judgment call. The best way to do this is to try both! Go to your doctor's office and take in everything that goes on around you. Take note of everything you experience while you are there. Then you should take that first big step and try an alternative treatment. Stay awake during this session and once again note everything that goes on around you and inside of you while you are there.

For both sessions, what goes on inside of you is the most important thing. This means, experience the feelings you are having while you are there. If you are feeling completely relaxed, frustrated, stressed or at ease. The feelings you feel inside could be the root of your problem if they are negative. Take the risk! Try both and you will instantly see which session is better for you. You do not want to swear off one or the other. You are just looking to find out which is a better fit for you.

Choosing The Perfect Practitioner

When you set out to find a great practitioner, there are many barriers that you will find. You will instantly see how hard it becomes to find a good practitioner who suits all your needs and who you feel comfortable with. You may also run into many practitioners who may fool you with the qualifications that they actually have. The last thing you want to do is find yourself in the hands of a fraud.

Below are some great tips that you can follow to help you to find a great practitioner.

1.) The first step in finding the perfect practitioner for you is to locate the ones that are located close to your area. This can be done by searching through the yellow pages or web site searches. Searching through the internet is the number one choice in finding a practitioner.

2.) Now that you have located a few practitioners in your area, the next step is to find out as much information about them as possible. The more information you have the better your decision. You need to look into their qualifications, find out their personality, how many years of practice, and anything else that you can find out.

3.) Finding out what type of affiliations they have in your society is something that is very important. The more affiliations they have and the better the reputation, the more confident you will feel giving this practitioner a chance. If you have heard nothing about a practitioner, than it makes it harder to take the risk.

These first three steps are essential in your progress in finding a great practitioner. They are extensive and may take awhile, but the time spent finding a good practitioner is time well spent. Before you call to arrange the first consultation, you need to be sure that the practitioner you have chosen fits the following criteria.

- Reasonable distance from your home.
- Reliable qualifications
- Great reputation in the society
- Been practicing for a good length of time
- Experienced with treating the problems you are going in for
- You are happy with the treatment methods that are going to be used
- You are happy with the price

This is a very important list of criteria that needs to be met. If there is even one of these factors that are not met, then you need to choose another practitioner. A practitioner is not a decision that you make on a whim. It takes a great deal of information and thought before choosing the practitioner that you feel will be right for you. You have to take into consideration the illness that you need to have treated. Some practitioners have different specialties and qualifications. This is the most important detail when searching for your practitioner.

Taking all of these pieces of advice and researched steps to follow, you are on the right track to finding a great practitioner. Choosing a practitioner is something that will take a lot of time and a lot of research. When the right practitioner is found you will instantly realize that the time you spent searching was well worth it.

Paying for Alternative Medical Treatments

Alternative medical treatments are becoming more and more popular as the years go on. People are becoming more aware of the results that alternative medical treatments can bring to their lives. After relying on conventional medicine for so long, alternative treatments are found to be a refreshing change for most people. Alternative medical treatments are something that can be used to supplement your already used conventional treatments or you can use them in replace of them.

Depending on the amount of treatment you are going to be taking advantage of and the severity of your problem, the price for treatment will vary. There are a few important questions that need to be answered before you venture into your alternative medical treatments. You want to be sure that you can afford to pay for these services or find out if your insurance company will cover these treatments. Below are some of the very important questions that need to be answered before you begin.

How Can Alternative Treatments Be Paid For?

Even though today the art of alternative treatments is becoming increasingly popular, there are still only very few health plans that include alternative treatments in their plan. Still, most people pay for their treatments out of their own pocket. These treatments are not overly expensive. It can become more expensive the more frequently that you use these treatments.

How Can I Find Out If My Insurance Covers This?

Finding out if your insurance covers these treatments is very important for everyone. Whether you can afford it or not, it is great if you do not have to pay for your sessions! All you have to do is call your insurance company and ask specific questions related to the treatments you want to use and how they can be covered.

If your insurance does cover these types of treatments, there is a good chance that there is a limit on the sessions that will be covered. You will find that there are many rules if in fact you are covered. Rules such as:

you are only covered if it is medically necessary by their terms there are limits on how many sessions or treatments covered there are special requirements for you to be covered

These are the three basic rules and restrictions that you will find in your insurance plan. The more popular these treatments become, the more common they will become in everyone's insurance plan.

Questions To Ask Your Practitioner

You want to remember to ask your practitioner if they even accept your health insurance, and if not what forms of payment they accept. This is important whether you have a large bill or not.

You will also want to find out if there will be any additional costs, such as diet supplements, medicine, etc. It is also a good idea to find out if you would be able to try a "trial period" treatment. This way you do not have to spend any money trying to find out if these forms of treatment are right for you. You will find that there are many practitioners out there who will be more than happy to extend you a small trial therapy. They want you to be happy with your treatment.

Hopefully, it will not be long before you will find more flexibility in your health insurance

coverage. For now, it is your responsibility to research your coverage and use what you can to your advantage. Alternative treatments are not expensive and do not have to be a burden to you if you research your coverage and payment options. These treatments are well worth it!

On Becoming an Alternative Medical Practitioner

Healing through alternative medicine is a broad subject, traditionally referred to as practices and applications not usually taught by conventional or western medical schools as treatment for illnesses. Alternative medicine is typically not covered by health insurance, although acupuncture, massage, and chiropractic have recently gotten the go ahead.

For those of you interested in becoming alternative medicine providers, the practice is divided into seven major categories: Bioelectricmagnetic applications-which include magnet therapy, diet, nutrition, and lifestyle changes (homeopathic practices), herbal medicine, manual healing, (Chinese medicine, massage, acupuncture) and biological treatments.

Alternative medicine is meant to treat the body holistically-body, mind, and spirit, and is highly based on preventative practices. That is, Alt. med. is geared toward preventing rather than simply treating symptoms of ailments. Actually, only about 30% of the world uses what we call western or modern medicine. The other 70% use holistic or alternative medicine and Americans are just now catching up.

The good news is that American doctors are beginning to see the benefits of alternative forms of therapy and more of them are beginning to add some form of alternative medicine to their practice. "Mainstream" doctors are beginning to refer patients for massage therapy, surgeons are referring to chiropractors. The result is that the terms "mainstream" and "alternative" are beginning to blur.

Alternative medicine is being used along with other alternative therapies or traditional therapies (called "complimentary") and reflects a shift in attitude. It seems people are much more accepting of alternative medicine if it is used in conjunction with conventional methods of treatment rather than as an "alternative" or "instead of."

Professional alternative medicine practitioners are trained by accredited schools and practice in established locations-no back alley medicine here-you must meet all the entry requirements of the holistic medicine schools and maintain excellent skills to become accredited. Each health care system has its own accreditation, and includes Traditional Oriental Medicine, acupuncture, homeopathy, naturopathy, anthroposophy, and ayurvedic (Indian) medicine.

Each system has its own theory of illness (although if you study them separately you will see that they are very much the same indeed, which is another feather in alternative medicine's cap-to have the same principles work on either end of the world), an educational plan to teach theory and practice, a support system and a legal and ethical committee to answer to. All have the need to restore balance as a common denominator.

Homeopathic medicine is used world wide, and involves natural animal, plant, and mineral substances. Practitioners of homeopath medicine usually are also accredited acupuncturists and are regulated by the food and drug administration. They treat acute and chronic diseases and into preventative therapies and promoting good health in order to prevent sickness. Homeopathy very much is able to combine modern medicine with natural and herbal care.

Native American alternative medicine involves much sweating and expelling of toxins which cause imbalance and disease. This is achieved by the use of herbs and teas, and a lot of heat. Ceremonial dances and chants add to the mystical properties of the healing.

Or maybe you're interested in working in the bioelectromagnetic field of alternative medicine. Working with magnets is growing in popularity as people are beginning to discover the benefits of wearing magnetic insoles in their shoes and sleeping on magnetically charged mattress pads. The magnets increase blood flow and bring about circulatory health which lessens back pain and headaches.

Chances are you've decided to enter the world of alternative medicine because you've had a good experience with it. Your current health provider can help you research the area of your choice and give you advice as to how to proceed.

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