

Learn the basics of natural healing and at-home applications to foster vitality. Discover the differences, strengths and weaknesses of healing modalities such as naturopathy, herbs, homeopathy, acupuncture, functional and integrative medicine, and how they work. You are your own best doctor.

Let's start with that last comment from the description...you are your own best doctor. That is true ESPECIALLY if there is an understanding of concepts of Nature Cure. All the modalities we discuss can be used to enhance or obstruct the bodies innate ability to heal.

Nature Cure: the idea that there are constructive and destructive principles in nature and that we, like all of nature, are animated by a healing force (Naturopaths refer to this in the principle *Vis Medicatrix Naturae*, "Trust the Healing Power of Nature"), and that when supported with right nutrition, hydration, rest and movement as well as spiritual/emotional support the body can and does correct/reconstruct itself. Nature Cure embraces prevention as the most intelligent of approaches to wellness. This balance is dependent upon vitality, presence and distribution of nutrition to all cells, and elimination of ingested and metabolic wastes. A disturbance of any of these will produce disease

Several points to ponder from this perspective:

- The Symptom ≠ The Illness
- Symptom Suppression vs. Symptom *Optimization* (example: fever)
- Germ Theory vs. Terrain Theory
- Body as ecosystem
- Surface vs. Deep Immunity (treatment vs prevention)
- Seasonal variation
- Kids vs. Adults
- Requires INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH

Modalities:

- Naturopathy: a collation of "non-intrusive" healing modalities founded on concept of VITALISM: "the theory that the origin and phenomena of life are dependent on a force or principle distinct from purely chemical or physical forces." Brought to the US by proponents of European Nature Cure practitioners (Priessnitz, Kneipp): Benedict Lust (considered Father of Naturopathic medicine...opened first school 1901), John Harvey Kellogg MD, Henry Lindlahr MD and others

Licensed vs unlicensed

Principles (6) that unite the profession:

1. First, to do no harm
2. Trust the healing power of nature
3. Treat the root cause of disease or imbalance
4. Doctor as teacher

5. Treat the whole individual: body, mind, spirit

6. Prevention

Basic modalities: nutrition, herbal medicine, homeopathy, physical medicine, hydrotherapy, counseling

- Nutrition: this modality is a foundation for most other holistic modalities. This unfortunately is not necessarily true in conventional medical studies where only frank deficiency is seen as basis for disease. The idea is that WITH the right balance of macronutrients, vitamins and minerals the body has the basics to be a self-monitoring/self-healing entity. Conversely WITHOUT these basic building blocks the body cannot right imbalances and these tend to snowball into dysfunctional states and eventually disease. Nutritional needs are 100% individual and depend not only on the person but life circumstances and individual challenges. This may include supplemental nutrients in physiological or orthomolecular doses BUT food is the foundation. Food, by its nature is safe; supplements need to be used with education. Food here is defined as whole, unprocessed, as nature designed.
- Botanical medicine: the use of plant substances to encourage shift in physiology; some plants are extremely safe and can be used in any age and in large doses. Other herbs are very potent and must be used in careful doses by a knowledgeable practitioner. Herbs can be used similarly to medications in dosage for a biochemical shift or can be used more in energetic application (such as drop dosing) matched to an individual constitution (Matthew Wood). Most traditional philosophies have a long history of herbal medicine (Western, Native, Chinese, Ayurveda, African, Tibetan) and plants may be used based on biochemical constituents (such as cardiac glycosides in Digitalis) or energetic properties (temperature, flavor, direction, organ affinity). Herbal medicine can be refined to each person and will be most effective if this manner. (Echinacea is not the answer for everyone:)) There is a lifetime of learning and something for everyone here. Obviously there are a large number of applications (everything from teas to standardized extractions and pharmaceuticals) of plant medicine depending on the person receiving and the reason. Taste can be a limiting factor...some herbs are amazing in action and abhorrent in taste. Sometimes, the taste is part of the medicine:)
 - General dosing "rules": if an herb is being taken to treat the digestive system take these with food; other systems take the herbs away from food.
 - Dilute tinctures in a small amount of water.
- Homeopathy: form of energy medicine, an individual medical science based on the principle of *similia similibus curantur*, "like cures likes" developed in the late 1700s by Samuel Hahnemann as a dissatisfaction with the conventional practices of medicine (bloodletting, mercury, etc). Unique to homeopathy: dilution; potentization; Direction of cure: from center to circumference, head down, within outward/more important to less important organs, from head to hands and feet; Reversal of symptoms; Return of old symptoms
 - Taken away from all other foods/beverages/tastes other than water by at least 15 minutes

- Acupuncture and Asian Medicine: placement of thin filament needles at specific points along energy meridians for local or non-local affect. Complete treatment in Chinese medicine incorporates 5 arms: acupuncture, diet, bodywork (tuina), movement and practice (tai chi or qigong plus meditation) and herbal therapies...the combination of all of these are more potent than a single modality
- Manipulative Modalities (Chiropractic, Osteopathy, Naprapathy, etc): Chiropractic foundation asserts that the musculoskeletal body if out of alignment, especially as it relates to the nervous system, cannot help but be dysfunctional. Osteopathy utilizes manual adjustment, myofascial release and other physical adjustments of muscle, fascia and bone. Naprapathy derives from osteopathy and chiropractic and utilizes manual manipulation.
- Massage/Bodywork: addresses structure (especially via the fascia) and the autonomic nervous system to bring body into balance. Relaxation techniques are immediately effective as are some interventions for pain. Structural reintegration requires prolonged treatment. LOTS of different techniques (myofascial release, trigger point therapy, Swedish, Craniosacral, etc)
- Hydrotherapy (aka hydropathy/water cure..integral modality of naturopathic medicine historically): the use of water of varying temperatures and applications to influence physiology especially via the circulatory, eliminatory and nervous systems. Numerous techniques such as immersions, retrostasis, derivation, solute delivery, etc
- Counseling: again numerous styles involved from psychoanalysis to CBT and other talk therapies
- Functional Medicine: a modern evolution of the importance placed on identifying root cause of disease; leans heavily on personalized treatment based often on extensive biochemical tests/labs
- Integrative Medicine: according to Andrew Weil MD, “**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.” Ideally, this and all of the above modalities attempt to go beyond symptom suppression to deal with true cause of imbalance and disease.