

What is alternative health care?

Health care has become a major issue for most Americans. Costs are skyrocketing, many of us do not have health care coverage and a visit to the doctor can prove both costly and unfruitful. The typical medical doctor has spent about eleven years in college and residency programs to earn their degree. While well educated, sometimes they don't have all the answers.

Due not to poor education, but perhaps a limited scope, the M.D. can not always help the patient resolve their health issue. In the last thirty years or so, alternative health care has sought to fill in the gaps. Allopathic medicine is the purvue of the medical doctor, dealing with the strict science of disease conditions. Pharmaceutical prescriptions, lab analysis and surgery are the main treatments available.

Alternative health care encompasses diagnosis and treatment programs which analyze body systems as a whole. While the medical doctor treats the symptoms of the patient, the alternative practitioner approaches disease as a systemic condition. The condition which brings the patient to the doctor may be only a symptom of an underlying problem of another area or organ.

For example, if you are frequently prone to bronchitis, the allopathic practitioner may prescribe antibiotics to resolve the infectious condition and thus bring it under control. The holistic practitioner may instead view the bronchitis as an underlying weakness of the immune system. The naturopathic, or holistic practitioner, recognizes that the bronchitis must be treated and may dispense a number of herbs which are natural antibiotics, such as garlic or elecampane root, a specific for respiratory problems to eliminate the coughing and excessive accumulation of phlegm. However, the alternative health practitioner won't stop there. He or she may also prescribe a natural immune system booster, such as echinacea, to get at the root of the problem which is causing the recurrent bouts of bronchitis. This alternative approach can eliminate the problem altogether.

Other examples of alternative health approaches include quit-smoking programs. While your regular M.D. may prescribe nicotine patches, they don't work for everyone. One alternative health discipline, accupuncture, employs the use of fine needles, placed along one of the 700-plus meridians established in Chinese medicine, to eliminate the desire to smoke. Many people successfully quit with such an alternative health approach.

Have you been plagued by migraine headaches? This can be a very difficult medical condition. While there are pharmaceutical prescriptions available to

counter and alleviate this painful condition, these medications may not work and may also carry serious baggage in the side effects. Alternative health practitioners may offer herbs or aromatherapy as an alternative solution, minus the side effects.

Good health is of concern to all of us. If you have unresolved medical conditions, you owe it to yourself to investigate what alternative health has to offer. To your best health!