

Complementary Therapies

Complementary therapies are also known as natural or traditional therapies and can be divided into three main categories:

- ‘natural’ therapies: herbal and naturopathic compounds, Chinese medicines, homeopathy, etc.
- mind-body (mindfulness) techniques: meditation, relaxation, support groups, counselling, music or art therapy, hypnotherapy, aromatherapy, etc.
- physical therapies: massage, yoga, tai chi, acupuncture, reflexology, Pilates, Alexander technique, etc.

It should be noted that such therapies are not subject to the same strict regulations as evidence based therapies. Studies have shown that more than 50% of patients with cancer have used some form of complementary therapies in addition to their conventional medical treatments. For many NET patients, taking a ‘holistic’ approach to their health improves their quality of life by addressing their dietary, physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

Before starting any complementary medicines or therapies it is important to understand:

- How the therapy works.
- Will the therapy cause harm, have side effects or interact with other medications or tests?

There is no conclusive scientific evidence for that natural therapies can successfully treat cancers; however, there is anecdotal evidence for mind-body techniques and physical therapies to assist in improving pain management, sleep, stress relief, depression, anxiety and general quality of life.

Before starting any complementary therapy it is important to discuss this with your doctor.