

Integrative Medicine

Healing
for mind,
body & spirit

Hippocrates said that the role of the physician is to “cure sometimes, heal often, and support always.” The practitioner of integrative medicine understands that where a physical cure proves elusive, healing at some level remains possible.

By Ann Carey Tobin, M.D.

What do the following people have in common?

- A menopausal woman who desires to age in good health
- A middle aged obese man with depression
- A woman recently diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis
- An elder adult with cancer who wants to explore all his therapeutic options?

These individuals have all benefited by augmenting their conventional Western-based health care with complementary healing modalities. They sought guidance from a practitioner experienced in the field of Integrative Medicine, a medical discipline that integrative medicine pioneer, Andrew Weil, M.D., calls “just good medicine.”

What is it?

Integrative medicine seeks to combine the best of all therapeutic modalities that are considered safe and effective, with the intention of nurturing an individual’s innate ability to heal. This approach calls on all aspects of a person’s being—mind, body and spirit—to facilitate the healing process and to promote balance in one’s life. It honors the healing process as one that is unique to each individual.

A basic tenet of this philosophy is the healing power of the therapeutic relationship. The partnership of practitioner and patient is considered paramount. As a consequence, the patient is empowered to be an active member of his health care team. Since integrative medicine is patient-centered, it’s the practitioner’s goal to understand the patient within the context of the relationships, events and beliefs that shape her life. The practitioner combines this knowledge, along with his medical expertise and good judgment, to address issues of prevention, wellness, and acute and chronic illness.

How it’s practiced

Integrative medicine employs the tools of the ancient healer—compassion, intuition, healer as teacher, and remains grounded in sound scientific principles.

An integrative medicine practitioner has the ability to navigate the world of complementary therapies and judge how such therapies might best augment, or complement, an individual’s health care regimen. A practitioner is skilled in a particular

medical specialty, and she is also qualified to provide appropriate recommendations in areas such as:

- Nutrition
- Vitamins/supplements
- Herbs
- Physical activity
- Manual medicine (e.g. massage, manipulation)
- Mind-body medicine
- Spirituality
- Other healing traditions (e.g. traditional Chinese medicine, energy medicine)

The goal is to provide the best health care possible for the individual.

Integrative medicine is just good medicine. It is practiced by health care professionals and trained integrative medicine practitioners in our area, who are available for consultation, or to collaborate with your health care provider, to provide individualized, comprehensive and supportive treatment plans.

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