

Integrative Therapy Fact Sheet: Homeopathy

What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine developed in Germany 200 years ago. It is part of the national health care system of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, South America, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India. It uses gentle, highly diluted remedies made from plants, animals, and minerals.

How Can Homeopathy Help Me?

Homeopathic remedies may help strengthen the body's self-healing response, helping it to overcome symptoms of an illness as well as side effects of the medical treatment. It may be useful for side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, i.e., nausea and vomiting, while at the same time promoting better energy, mood, sleep, digestion, and a sense of well-being.

What is Involved?

Homeopathic remedies are inexpensive liquids, dry pellets, or tablets available in health food stores and some pharmacies. Homeopathic remedies are regulated by the FDA in the same manner as over-the-counter drugs. Homeopathic remedies are commonly used to relieve some symptoms related to poison ivy, sprains, or skin conditions. For chronic conditions, treatment is tailored to the individual and requires meeting with a professional homeopath. Practitioners select remedies by look at the whole patient, including not only symptoms but lifestyle, mental and emotional states, and other factors.

What Has Been Proven?

Homeopathy has been shown to be effective in studies, mostly done in Europe, for a wide variety of conditions. Results of a trial in Europe show homeopathy is effective in 20 different conditions.¹

Patients report fewer side effects, quicker reduction of symptoms, a lower rate of relapse, and greater satisfaction with the therapy. Homeopathy has not been studied scientifically for cancer.

What Does Homeopathy Cost?

Over-the-counter remedies cost \$5 to \$10. Consulting with a professional for the first time is a lengthy visit and typically costs \$150 to \$300.

Laws about what is required to practice homeopathy vary among states. Most homeopathy is practiced along with another health care practice for which the practitioner is licensed, such as being an M.D. or dentist.

Possible Side Effects

Homeopathic remedies do not usually cause side effects. However, if the remedy is too strong, it can cause a temporary worsening of symptoms. People who are self-treating should purchase the lowest potency available until they are familiar with how their bodies react to remedies. Do not take additional doses of any homeopathic remedy without guidance of a trained homeopath.

Is Homeopathy Offered at the Zakim Center?

The Zakim Center does not offer homeopathic medicine. However, if you have questions about integrative therapies or wonder if homeopathic medicine is right for you, speaking with our nurse practitioner may be helpful. Our nurse practitioner will explain the safety and benefits of integrative therapies, how they work in conjunction with traditional cancer treatment, and which ones may best fit your diagnosis, treatment schedule, and interests. To schedule an integrative medicine consult, please call **617-632-3322**.

Cost of Integrative Medicine Consultations

Integrative medicine consultations at Dana-Farber are billed to your insurance company, and the cost varies based on coverage.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, financial assistance is available to those who qualify for our other fee based services including acupuncture and massage. For more information, please contact the Zakim Center office at **617-632-3322** or Zakim_Center@dfci.harvard.edu.

Additional Information

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health's "Homeopathy" Page
<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/homeopathy>

To learn more about the Zakim Center's programs and services, please visit our website at dana-farber.org/zakim, email Zakim_Center@dfci.harvard.edu, or call **617-632-3322**.

This document is for informational purposes only. The content is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

¹ Reilly, D. et al. Homeopathy and Conventional Medicine: An Outcome Study Comparing Effectiveness in a Primary Care Setting. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. Volume 7, No. 2. 2001. P149-159.
www.fda.gov/ora/compliance_ref/cpg/cpgdrg/cpg400-400.html