



Brain Tumour Australia Information

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Complementary Therapies and Medicine

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The information on this topic is for general interest. It is not intended to be used for self-prescribing of any medical conditions; and we do not, in any way, make recommendations for an individual. As always, we recommend that you consult your doctor if you have any medical condition before commencing any new diet or medicines.

Definitions

- **Conventional treatments** are those most often used by doctors to treat people with brain tumours, such as surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy. Generally, conventional treatments have been tested in clinical trials and through long experience with patients.
- **Complementary therapies** are treatments that are given alongside conventional treatments.

Alternative therapies are identified as treatments that are intended to be used instead of conventional treatments.

What is complementary medicine?

Complementary medicine generally refers to individuals who practice and promote the use of Natural or "traditional" Medicine:

- Naturopaths
- Acupuncturists
- Chinese herbalists
- Homeopaths
- Herbalists
- Chiropractors
- Osteopaths
- Massage therapies such as shiatsu and aromatherapy.

Under Australian law, a qualified medical practitioner is the only legally medically trained individual to treat brain tumours (or any cancer). However, Complementary Medicine is frequently used by individuals as a adjunct to conventional treatment such as surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy

Therefore, it is best to get some specialist advice.

If you are receiving medical treatment for a brain tumour diagnosis always mention any complementary medicines or treatments to your treating specialist or general practitioner.

While they may not have specialised knowledge on natural medicines, it is still best they are kept fully informed.

Some complementary 'medicines' may stop your radiation therapy or chemotherapy from being affective. So it is crucial that you discuss this issue with your treating medical team

Many complementary medicine practitioners put a large emphasis on diet.

Many factors influence what foods are best for an individual's needs including climate, physical activity, lifestyle, condition and age.

Often, it is not what we eat that is important so much as what we need to avoid.

Create a health plan that includes diet and other supportive strategies:

- What foods to avoid?
- What foods to eat more of?
- What supplements to take?
- Consider tolerance to taking pills, and the taste
- Consider your budget.
- What form of treatment support may you get such as acupuncture, Chiropractic or Shiatsu massage?
- What changes are necessary to reduce stress?
- What is the best exercise plan to improve oxygenation of the body that may include yoga, walking or more golf or fun sport?

For instance : Exercise: Walking for a half hour daily and ten minutes of stretching. Meditation: Twenty minutes per day.

Memorial Sloan—Kettering Cancer Centre

Provides an excellent overview on many Complementary therapies

<http://www.mskcc.org/mskcc/html/11570.cfm>

Note: For some people, sudden and radical change is not supportive, use common-sense and seek professional advice.