

**Are complementary medicine and alternative medicine different from each other?**

Yes, they are different.

Complementary medicine is used together with conventional medicine. For example, using aromatherapy to help lessen a patient discomfort following surgery would be a complement to conventional medicine.

Alternative medicine is used in place of conventional medicine. An example of an alternative therapy is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of undergoing surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy that has been recommended by a conventional doctor.

**What is integrative medicine?** As defined by NCCAM (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Institute), integrative medicine combines mainstream medical therapies and complementary and alternative therapies for which there is some high quality scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness.

Source:

Selected InFocus Newsletter Article

**Complementary medicine? Alternative medicine? Integrative medicine? What's up?**

---

*From InFocus Newsletter Vol. 13 No. 1, March 2005*